

Hi my name is Monisa I'm 19 going on 20. I am a frequent reviewer for stories. I use the name Tay for most of them that are unsigned (My 2 yr. old cousin wanted me to use her name so I stuck with it). But when I am signed in, I sign in as Jussgee (don't ask)

This is my first attempt at any type of fan fiction. I love Harry Potter books. I am a H/Hr shipper just because it's what seems better to me. I also read general fics. For my first fic I wanted to try a H/Hr AU fic.

Now I am warning you in advance that I am a full time college student and I work part time. I know the chapters are short and I'm working on that...really I am!

I will not have a set time to update, but I will update. It may take a while and I'm not talking about a week, maybe more or less. I'll take criticism but please let it actually be helpful.

Thanks!

Chapter 1: A friend (Prologue)

It was bright and sunny day on Privite Drive. All the children were outside playing in the perfect green grass with their pet cats and dogs, while their parents laughed at corny country club jokes. In fact it seemed like the perfect picture of the perfect neighborhood with perfect people and perfect domestic animals.

Perfect. Exactly what three members of number 4 Privite Drive were not. Far from it actually. Sitting in his living room with his feet propped under cushions and a newspaper in his hand was Vernon Dursley. Vernon Dursley was what average people would call a horrible mix between a walrus and Shamoo. He liked to think of himself as the 'big man' of the house. He wasn't far off with the big part, but his pompous overshadowing attitude left him feeling he was in authority and deserved the most undying respect from his horse-faced wife and Shamoo Jr. son. Respect. Not a bad thing to ask for, but the littlest inhabitant of number 4 Privite Drive was expected to serve.

Harry Potter was seven years old, living under the cupboard of his Uncle's home. His uncle's horse-faced wife's name was Petunia. Young Harry knew she was his mother's sister. He knew because every day good old' Uncle Vernon would give Shamoo Jr. ...uhhmmm.... I meant Dudley lessons about how not to grow up.

"Dudley. This world needs good respectable people. People like me, you, and your mum. We're hardworking people with good morals. So it's perfectly fine to treat the people lower than us like their, well...*lower than us*. That's why that Potter boy will never be seen outside this house unless he's doing chores; if it weren't law, he would not go to school. His mum was a whore and his bum father was a....well, he was abum!"

This is the type of pep talk that Harry heard Vernon give Dudley everyday. Harry was ashamed of himself. At times he felt he deserved his beatings and days without food. He was told he was a disgrace to the world, and Uncle Vernon keeping him inside to do chores was his only way to matter. That didn't stop it though. That didn't stop the longing to feel loved and cared for. To be held by someone when he was hurt. To crawl into his parents bed when he had a nightmare. Harry knew he deserved what he longed for because a friend told him so.

Dudley made sure he didn't have any friends at school, but Dudley's threats didn't stop one girl. Harry remembers when he was five and first got the chance to go to a school.

Harry saw dozens of other kids. He was sure he would make a friend! He smiled with delight as the bell rang signaling the start of class. When Harry took his seat, he was upset to see that no one would sit next to him. He was downright depressed. Dudley turned around from his group of friends and smirked at his cousin. Harry knew that smirk. Dudley told them not to be friends with Harry, and being the biggest kid in class they obeyed.

Just when he thought school would be as lonely as it was at home, a girl walked in late for class. She had wild brown bushy windblown hair and her cheeks were flushed. She obviously had been running to

make it to the first day of school on time. She looked at the teacher and immediately began to cry.

"I...I t.. tried to be on time.. but my mum insisted I eat breakfast instead of finishing the last ten pages of my summer reading". She was completely hysterical by the end of her explanation. All the kids laughed at her. All except Harry. Harry knew how it felt to be ridiculed and made fun of (Dudley made sure of that).

*After the teacher, Mrs. Henderson, calmed the little girl down she told her to take a seat. The girl immediately sat next to Harry, shocking Harry as well as the rest of the class. It was then the chatter started. Harry noticed that they all looked and pointed to him and the girl with disgust. He was so focused on everyone else he didn't notice the girl sitting next to him speak. Feeling bad about ignoring her and wanting to know what she said Harry bravely introduced himself "Hi, I..I..I'm Harry Potter. I didn't h..h..hear what you said before". **Well so much for being brave.***

"I said you don't have to sit next to me if you don't want. All the others are talking about us because you're sitting with me. I could leave if you want...". She trailed off while picking up her books so she can leave

"NO. Don't leave" Harry said a little too quickly.

"But we both know they're talking about me because I'm a nerd and you are talking to me" The girl was on the verge of crying again.

Harry desperately wanted a friend. He could tell she needed one too so he tried everything to convince her to stay. "No they don't like me because my cousin told them not to be my friend. So they are probably just talking about you sitting next to me. I have no friends and I would love for you to sit here". Harry was relieved when the girl sat back down with a smile on her face. Harry was happy just seeing her smile at him and was even happier when she held out her hand for him to shake. Harry eagerly grabbed her hand and shook it a little too hard, but it was the start of a friendship non-the-less.

"My name is Hermione Granger. Nice to meet you Harry Potter"

That was two years ago. Harry hadn't seen Hermione in almost two years. After a few months of school Hermione's parents moved closer to their dental practice and she had no other choice but to transfer schools. Harry thought about her all the time. She **was** the only friend he ever had even if it was for only three months. Harry spent his free time in the Dursley's backyard under a tree thinking of all the times he and Hermione would sit isolated in recess while playing hand games. Or when they would play two person tag while the others ignored them. Harry loved those times because he felt more like a kid than a slave. One of those days Hermione told him she never had friends because she was too smart and they teased her, beat her up, and called her know-it-all. Then Harry decided to tell Hermione about his past. He told every thing from his parents death in a car crash to the way his **family** treated him. She told him he deserved to be loved by someone, everyone did. It was that day they made a pack to be best friends forever. Harry just didn't know forever would end the day the Grangers moved.

Chapter 2: A Friend Returns

Five Years Later

“Boy! Get down here and polish the floors! Marge is coming over for the weekend and house better be just spiffy when she gets her or I’ll...” Harry ignored the rest of Vernon’s ramblings. He already knew the routine. He headed downstairs and started polishing the floors before he got no food for a few days.

Harry Potter just turned twelve years old two days ago. He hadn’t changed that much over the years he was still relatively small for his age, with messy black hair, brilliant green eyes covered by round glasses, but the most noticeable thing was his lightening bolt scar. Over the years Harry had given up on ever seeing Hermione again, but he never forgot about her... ever. But he did find out something special about himself. He was a wizard. Not just any wizard; he was The-Boy-Who-Lived. It turns out his parents didn’t die in a car crash. They died protecting him from an evil wizard named Voldemort. Last year on his birthday he was accepted to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He was really famous. He hated the fame because he couldn’t tell what people were true to him. By the time school started, he had plenty of people that wanted to be his friend, but in the end he only had one friend, named Ron Weasley. Ron was a red headed boy with freckles with a family of seven children. Harry thought they were good friends but he knew it was not like him and his first friend. Ron would get mad when new articles came out about Harry, but they would eventually make up. He missed his new home.

“Boy if I say it one more time” Vernon started ,but was startled to see Harry was already standing there putting away the rags. “You’re not allowed to do any of your freaky business outside of school. You used it to polish the floors”

“No Uncle Vernon. It’s finished from years of experience.” Harry replied sarcastically.

“Don’t get smart with me BOY! Now go to the garden and pick the weeds. Then shower! Marge will be here in 30 minutes. Now GO!”

Harry picked the weeds with record speed, while pricking his hand a few hundred times. He rushed to take a shower, and was ready just in time to answer the door for Aunt Marge. "Oh. You're looking uglier than usual. Get my bags boy and put my things away in the guest room drawers" As Harry walked away, heading towards the stairs, Marge yelled "AND DON'T TOUCH MY THONGS". It was then he knew he wouldn't sleep at all that night, out of fear of closing his eyes and seeing a hippo in a thong.

At dinner Vernon was *actually* away from the table. He couldn't remember a time ever seeing Uncle Vernon late for a meal. As Harry served the food he kept looking at Vernon's chair wondering where he was. It was unlike him to miss dinner. Or anything that has to do with food for that matter. Marge must have noticed him missing too because she got up and yelled "Vernon! Dinner is being served by HIM and we won't be able to watch your food forever."

Vernon wobbled in the room; Harry thought was his attempt to run. Petunia asked "What kept you dear?"

"I was looking out the window at the new neighbors. And I must say they look like very respectable people. They are moving next door in number three. Just them and their daughter. She's a looker Dudders! My boy will have her as a girl in no time!" Dudley was drooling. ***Is it from the thought of a girlfriend or the six steaks in front of him?*** Harry smirked at his thoughts.

"What are you smirking at boy? Does my nephew Diddylkins getting a girlfriend make you happy? Maybe one day you can buy yourself a whore and experience what Duddy will when the girl meets and fall for our Dudders. Now, we will introduce ourselves tomorrow, and boy you will be introduced as the servant. We want my brother to look higher in authority don't we? Good. Now eat the scraps and go to bed boy."

Before Harry could grab the scraps from the table, Marge fed it to her dog. "You should have been faster to my offer. Now, BED!"

Harry nodded and walked up stairs. When he got to his new room he punched a hole in the wall out of anger. ***Oh no. I'll have to fix that before uncle Vernon sees it. Why does she have to come here! I***

hate her and I want to leave this hell that's supposed to be home.
Harry tried to go to sleep but the disturbing hippo kept popping into his head. He decided to sneak out and take a walk.

Harry slipped on some of Dudley's old sweat pants and set out for the front door. Before he got there he realized it was midnight and he didn't have anywhere to go. So he went out to the back garden to his favorite spot under the tree. Harry sat and let the real events of his first year at Hogwarts sink in. His first day was horrible.

Harry stepped onto the platform and couldn't find Platform 9¾. He searched all around until he saw a red-headed family disappear through the wall. Harry thought that looked like magic so he closed his eyes and ran through the wall waiting for pain. When he realized he was fine he walked, in awe, onto the train. A few days before he found out that he was a half-blood because his mum was muggle; he also found out what muggle was. What shocked him the most was when Hagrid said "Arry yeh mum and yeh da' died savin' ya from the Dark Lord, You-Know-Who. Yer the only one ter ever survive the killing curse, and you killed You-Know-Who. People love ya; yer a celebrity!" Every since then Harry has been sort of upset. Him being a celebrity means he wouldn't have any true friends who like him for him. They all want the Boy-Who-Lived.

Harry walked into an empty compartment and set Hedwig, his pet owl, in the seat next to him while storing his trunk. 20 minutes later he met Ron Weasley.

"Do you mind if I sit here? All the others are full." Ron asked timidly

"Yeah you can sit"

"Thanks! My name's Ron Weasley, What house do you want to be in? I want to be Gryffindor like the rest of my family"

"Um, I don't really know I'll just wait and see" The rest of the ride was quiet. Harry didn't think he had much in common with Ron. When he arrived at Hogwarts many people were talking about him. It reminded him of the first day of Muggle School, except they were happy to see the famous boy. The sorting hat put Harry in Gryffindor. He wasn't

surprised that everyone in Gryffindor yelled “We’ve got Potter, we’ve got Potter. We’re gonna win the House Cup for sure!”

Throughout the beginning, life was bad for Harry. He had a professor called Snape that hated him; he had no friends because people didn’t find him as cool as they imagined; and Harry kept getting pains in his scar. The one good thing was he got to be the seeker for the quidditch team. That eventually lead to more pain when he found himself in the hospital wing.

When Halloween arrived that changed every thing

*Professor Quirrell burst in the door during meal time “There’s a a aa troll in ttthe school heading towards the boys bathroom!” And he promptly fainted. **How can Defence against the Dark Arts teacher faint? Isn't he supposed to be a bit braver?***

Harry remembered seeing Ron leave from the rest of their doormats to go to the restroom. As everyone else were sent to the common rooms Harry went to the restrooms to get Ron. He may not have been his friend, but he wouldn’t sit back and do nothing. When he got there, Ron was crying in a corner saying “please m...mister troll don’t eat me” Harry would have laughed if the situation was so serious. When Ron noticed him Harry signaled him not to say anything. Harry aimed his wand ant the trolls club and yelled “Wingardium Leviosa!” The troll turned around startled and confused, grunting what Harry thought was troll curses. Then Harry released the spell and the club thunked the troll in the head knocking it out cold.

Ron looked up in awe and said “Wicked”

Ron and Harry had detention for a month but they gained a friendship in the process. They mostly talked about quidditch and how much they hated class, but it was friendship-non the less.

Things got better or worse depending on how you look at it. On one hand Gryffindor won the House Cup. On the other hand Harry met the thing that killed his parents. He suspected Snape was trying to get something out of the bowels of the school so he got Ron and followed Snape. At least they thought they were following Snape. Harry and Ron first encountered the Devils Snare. Lucky for them

Harry read about the Snare and sunlight; with enough power he was able to free him and Ron. Then, according to Dumbledore, Ron played the best game of wizard's chess ever! Ron sacrificed himself and his piece in the game so Harry can "catch that ugly Snape, he gives the worst homework". When Harry got to the room he found a mirror with professor Quirrell standing there. To say Harry was shocked would be an understatement.

"Get the boy over here". Harry was startled because he didn't see where the voice came from. Quirrell grabbed Harry and made him stand in front of the mirror. When Harry looked up he saw his parents standing over each shoulder.

Quirrell got impatient and yelled "What do you see!"

Harry said "I see my parents. They must not have been killed by that stupid Voldemort!"

"Reveal me to the boy." Quirrell took off his turban and revealed Lord Voldemort. "Are you saying I'm stupid Harry?"

Harry was absolutely terrified, but in the mirror his parents were calming him down. His father put a red stone in his pocket and the real Harry felt his pocket bulge; when he put his hand in his pocket he felt the stone. Voldemort was still rambling. When Quirrell realized Harry wasn't listening to his master, he reached out to choke Harry. Harry was prepared for the pain that Uncle Vernon put on him many times before when he saw Quirrell writhing away in pain. A light bulb went off in his head and he reached out to touch him again. Quirrell disappeared after being turned into ashes. Voldemort flew away in pain and Harry fainted.

What a year. Harry was shook out of his thoughts by a squeaking noise coming from the back yard of number 3. Harry ducked and slowly walked over to the wooden fence and peaked through the hole in the old fence. He saw a girl sitting on a swing with her head down. Her hair was brown and thick but that was about all he could make out with her head down. Harry was so wrapped up in trying to see the girl that the Dursley's wanted to introduce to Dudley, that he didn't realize that he was moving forward. He tripped over a twig and successfully completed the task of knocking down the fence. "I'm so sorry I... I just

was curious and I guess I wasn't careful, and I promise to fix that..." Harry said this out of pure fear that the new neighbors would think he was a snoop on their daughter, not to mention the trouble he would get in with the Dursley's for making a bad first impression.

When Harry looked up to the girl he can see in her face that she was clearly startled. But something looked really familiar about her. Her brown eyes. The light sprinkle of freckles on her nose. The look of realization on her face... *wait she looks like...*

"Hermione?"

"Harry?"

Wait she looks like...

“Hermione?”

“Harry?”

Chapter 3: Reintroductions & Shocking Conversations

Harry had no idea how long they were standing there staring at each other taking in the changes in their appearance. Wow, *milk really does a body good!* They both thought at the same time. To the average person Harry looked like a scrawny twelve year old boy and Hermione a buck toothed nerd, which in all honesty may have been true; but after seeing someone that you've haven't seen for five years one tends to notice even the smallest changes.

“Well.... humph” Before Harry could put together a coherent sentence, he was tackled in a bear hug by Hermione. Not that Harry would complain about having a girl on top of him, but what if someone saw? The other important factor was oxygen. “Her...Hermione? I can’t breath.”

“Oh, sorry Harry. I’ve just missed you so much” Hermione stood up and dusted herself off. Then held out a hand to help Harry get on his feet. “What were you doing Harry? You scared me senseless.”

“Well, my uncle said that we had new neighbors and they were going to introduce her to Dudley so maybe he can have a girlfriend. I was back here and heard a noise go I peaked in to see this mystery girl and I tripped and fell over a twig” Harry said the last part sheepishly.

“Ugh, I don’t want to be introduced to Dudley. That fat pig is horrendous. Remember when I told him you and I would always be friends? He got so mad, he tried to beat me up! I mean really! I’m a girl! But he didn’t care.” When she realized she was drifting into her memory of how much she hated Dudley, she decided to change the subject. “What were you doing out this late?”

“Well my Aunt Marge is here and she really made me mad and it’s hard to sleep” Harry shuddered thinking of that damn hippo as Marge.

"It's nice to have my own quiet time anyway. I was thinking about my new school"

"Oh. So... Do you have a new best friend?" Harry saw the hurt in her eyes, but she quickly tried to cover it up. "Not that it's a bad thing. I was gone for five years. You were bound to have a bunch of friends anyway. You're a nice guy Harry so... um yeah" She finished lamely.

"Well, I know this may sound stupid, but I've only made one friend since you've left. He's nice and all, but I always thought we would be best friends forever like we promised."

"No! It's not stupid at all. I haven't made any new friends. None at all. It didn't bother me because I knew you'd always be my friend. We can even pick up where we left off. You know, catch up. Tell our deepest secrets that we can't share with others like old times... I know I sound a little pushy or a bit desperate but it's been horrible not having any real friends Harry. I only get my tutor as company and she's an old lady, not that I don't respect her, but it's not the same." After seeing Harry give a nod of understanding she perked back up, "So, should you start or me?"

Harry was trying to figure out if he should tell Hermione the whole truth. ***She would freak out if she found out I was a wizard and what I went through with Voldemort this past year. But she is my best friend. I should be honest with her. Oh, Merlin this is gonna end horribly.*** "Hermione, I think I should start. I want you to believe me with everything I say. I would never lie about the thing I'm going to tell you and I don't want you to think I'm a freak"

"Harry. I'd never call you a freak. I think you're..." Harry abruptly cut her off.

"No. let me tell you everything before you say that. Ok. From the beginning everything with the Dursley's are the same. They are just as horrible now, than they were when I was younger. But last year on my birthday I got a letter saying I was accepted in a school called Hogwarts. It's a school for witches and wizards. You know, people with magic in them somewhere. Where? I wouldn't know. But it's definitely there. I found out I'm a celebrity because I survived the killing curse from the most powerful dark wizard of the time named

Voldemort. It bounced back and killed him. Now everyone loves me because I'm the Boy-who-lived. I didn't have any friends because they only liked me for my fame. At least I didn't until Halloween. I saved a boy from a troll and we stayed friends after that. I never forgot you. I kept comparing him to you when it came to how close we were. I really missed you. You're the only one who likes me for me. Or I hope you still do" ***Oh no. she looks shocked. Well of course she's shocked you dope! I messed everything up. Why did I have to open my big mouth?***

"Harry. I'm a little shocked about everything but it's believable." ***It's believable? I wouldn't have believed it if Hagrid hadn't given Dudley a tail.***

"Actually, I'm more shocked that I never heard of you. Let me start from the beginning. When I was forced to move I went into a shell. I eventually got out of it but school was always harder with no friends so I buried myself in my studies. Last year, when I was eleven, I got a letter saying I was accepted to Hogwarts. I never went though. My parents and I thought it was some kind of joke. I mean honestly, witches and wizards? What person would openly believe that? So I stayed in my regular school for a month, until October when Albus Dumbledore came to my house with a hat. He called it the Sorting Hat. He sat it on my head and it put me in Gryffindor. I've been getting tutored by my head of house, Professor McGonagall. I wasn't allowed to go because I never responded to the first letter, and technically since there was no response, there wasn't any official acceptance. In short I wasn't accepted that year because it was past the deadline. But since I was tutored I can go this year. She says I'm the smartest witch of my age. I read a lot of magical books but I've only seen the name Boy-Who-Lived or H. Potter. Ugh, I feel so stupid. It crossed my mind once or twice, but what are the odds that I personally knew H. Potter. I never even knew you were him Harry."

To say Harry was shocked would be the understatement of the century. His best friend can now relate to him more than he thought possible. She was a witch! They sat down under 'Harry's Tree' as they liked to call it and talked all night. Filling in everything else that happened over the years. It was getting really late (or early, depending on how you look at it) because the sun was coming up. "I

gotta go Harry. I'll tell my dad that the wind blew the fence down. It was old anyway. He always liked you, and I don't want to spoil it by saying you were peeping on his only daughter." They chuckled at her last statement.

As Hermione walked to her door Harry stopped her. "Um, Hermione? Don't let my uncle know you're a witch. He thinks we are freaks. That's the reason he never liked me in the first place. He hates all things magical, including the word magic."

"Don't worry Harry. I'll talk to my parents; we'll have a cover up by....well, today. I'll meet you for the first time in five years again tomorrow" After the laugh they shared, they walked in their respective homes.

Harry fell asleep with thoughts of his best friend and how Hogwarts was going to be great this year.

"Don't worry Harry. I'll talk to my parents; we'll have a cover up by....well, today. I'll meet you for the first time in five years again tomorrow" After the laugh they shared, they walked in their respective homes.

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Chapter 4: Dinner and Getting Settled

"POTTER"

Harry jumped up in his bed, startled from his sleep. He looked over at the old alarm clock that Dudley thought was stupid to have when you have parents, and it read 9:15 am. Harry could not believe it. He was asleep for about three hours! ***I should have remembered I have to serve breakfast! This is going to be a long day. I wonder what cover up Hermione and her parents came up with.*** Harry threw on a shirt and pants. He rushed downstairs and saw the family at the table eating breakfast. Seeing Harry's quizzical look Petunia said "I cooked breakfast since you chose to sleep all day! Now go and mow the lawn." As Harry left to do as he was told she added "And trim the bushes. And make sure it's done perfectly and quickly" Even with his

back facing them, Harry could see the ‘you go girl’ look Marge was giving Petunia.

Harry went to the yard and picked up the old fence that fell and moved it aside. Harry spent 80 minutes cutting the front and back grass then he trimmed the bushes. That was extremely hard work for 90 degree weather (about 32 Celsius). Harry walked in the house literally dripping sweat. “HOW DARE YOU DISRESPECT THIS HOUSE BY LEAVING YOUR FILTH ON THE FLOOR. TAKE A SHOWER AND PUT ON THE TUX I BOUGHT YOU. YOU ARE THE BUTLER! AND YOU BETTER APPRECIATE IT” Vernon was absolutely furious. “Now you will address me and Dudley as sir. Petunia and Marge will be maam. Do you got it boy? No funny business or I’ll make you wish you were never born” ***you already make me wish that every morning.***

Harry ran upstairs, showered, and changed into his penguin suit. Harry may have been uncomfortable but he could help but smirk at the thought that ‘he cleans up well’. It was nearing noon when he heard the door open. He ran to the window and saw Vernon and Petunia talking to the grangers. They all looked so happy and perfect. Then Vernon laughed heartily and said “Why don’t you come over for dinner? We have a butler just waiting to serve you.” Harry didn’t know whether to roll his eyes or be happy that he would see Hermione again.

“BOY GET DOWN HERE NOW” When Harry got to the bottom of the stairs his uncle rounded on him with a finger in his face. “You will cook the best steak you’ve ever made and I don’t want any cheap side dishes. I want a full course meal. Have the tables made by 7:00 tonight... What are you still doing here? GET TO WORK!”

There was no denying that Harry was afraid of his uncle. Sure he despised him; but the fear was inevitable. Years of beatings, starvation, and emotional abuse had paid its toll.

Vernon achieved his most prized accomplishment. He made Harry Potter, boy wizard, fear him and he loved every minute of it. Vernon knew Harry couldn’t use magic outside of school. That wasn’t his major problem. He would have a problem if Harry were to go to the

police about it. It was obvious the boy was small for his age and Harry could easily show some of the scars on his back. Vernon would be in jail before he could tell his conscience he was going. So he spent years putting fear in the boy. He knew the Potter kid despised him. But the key was the fear that never let him act on his hatred. Vernon loved his life.

Harry was finishing dinner as he heard the doorbell ring. He stood by the closed kitchen door straining to hear what was being said. "Welcome to our humble home. Dinner will be served shortly." Harry heard rustling of coats and felt the vibrations of Vernon walking the Grangers to the dinning room. "This is my lovely wife Petunia, you met earlier" ***Try ugly wife Petunia.*** "This is my beautiful sister Marge" ***HUMPH beautiful.*** "And this is my roguishly handsome son Dudley. He takes after me" ***In more ways than you know.*** Harry could practically hear Hermione rolling her eyes at the last part.

It was silent for a while so Petunia spoke up. "Well young lady, why don't you sit next to my Dudders."

"Oh I don't see why I never noticed before! Aren't you Dudley Dursley?"

"Erm...Yeah! Have we met before? I know I would have recognized your pretty face."

"Well... we weren't exactly on good terms. I was a friend of Harry's. I'm Hermione Granger, remember?" Dudley made a sour look and quickly wiped it off his face. The rest of the Dursley's tried not to glare too hard her.

"Well, you've grown up and Harry was sent off to St. Brutus' school for delinquent boys. He's only here for the summer. But he's horrible. Isn't he dad?"

"Yes. The boy is now our butler. The school thought it might be good to strengthen his morals and appreciate the littlest things in life. We do everything for the boy but there is no good luck. Our Dudley is in Smeltings! We're proud of him!"

"Oh I was hoping Harry not have gone bad. He was nice as a child. But they are the ones who turn out rough. I'm in a boarding school too. It's in Scotland. The best! I'm the head of my year" Hermione said with a sweet voice. **A little too sweet. What is she up to?**

Harry heard the conversation die down so he went to serve the appetizers. He couldn't help but smirk at how Hermione couldn't take her eyes off him. He quickly hid it and continued serving. Harry stood to the side while everyone ate and was pleased to see everyone was enjoying the food. He may have hated the fact that he has to cook, but he takes pride in his food. Vernon started up another conversation while Harry was serving the main course. "So what do you do if you don't mind my asking?"

Mrs. Granger spoke up this time. "My husband and I are both dentists. We own our own practice a few miles away. We plan on staying this time."

Vernon clapped his hands and startled everyone. Harry had to try to hold in his laughter. "Well! We are fairly matched after all. I own a drill company. Maybe we should talk business sometime. We sell everything from dentist drills, to carpentry drills."

"Yea we will see about business one day" Mr. Granger said trying to put him off without being rude.

"Oh, daddy! The fence that divides our yards fell down last night. The wind took it away when I was sitting in the garden."

"Well, the butler, Harry, is also very handy. He can fix the fence." Petunia wanted to make a good impression. **Yeah why not volunteer me for manual labor.**

"None sense. I'll have a contractor do it. He can add a small gate to connect our yards. Just in case of emergencies." **Yes the Grangers are on my side. They want me to have contact with Hermione.** "But we can use a hand in repairing the house and moving the rest of our furniture in" Mr. Granger added. **WHAT! Take deep breaths Harry! You trust Hermione. This must be a part of her plan. Oh forget the plan. They're trying to make me a slave.**

"Yes of course you can work the boy; adds to his morals." Vernon was ecstatic.

"Great! We may need him for about three weeks though. Plumbing, painting, building; it would be a lot of hard work!"

Mrs. Granger sounded just as eager and menacing as Vernon, "Do you want him over our house at a certain time. I know he may have chores here."

"No. You can keep him those three weeks. Just as long as our lawn is mowed every week we'll be fine!"

Mr. Granger pulled out his wallet, "How much should we pay you? Good help is hard to find!"

Marge waved her hands signaling a negative to Mr. Granger. "No need to pay just think of it as neighborly sharing. So when my brother needs your trimmers don't be shy" They all laughed at this. ***Please let this be a part of the plan.*** But they were showing no sign of sympathy for him. Vernon excused himself and grabbed Harry and took him to the kitchen.

Once they were in private, Vernon whispered harshly, "Listen boy. You will be on your best behavior there. You will do as you're told. And you are their tool for the next three weeks" Vernon grabbed Harry by the collar. "If you mess this up. I'll make sure you'll never walk again.

Harry nodded and went upstairs to let Hedwig out. "Fly to Ron's girl. Ask if you can stay for the summer...or hoot... just get the message across okay?.." Hedwig nodded an affirmative and flew away. Harry packed his few clothes and put his wand in the bottom of the bag. When he got back downstairs the Grangers were saying goodbye to the Dursley's.

Mr. Granger looked at Harry and said, "Come on boy we don't have all day." Harry trudged along following the Granger women into number 3. Harry held his head down as he got in the house. When he looked up the house was perfectly furnished in tip top condition. He looked over at Hermione with confusion written on his face. She

beamed at him then hugged him, more like cut off air supply, but once again he wasn't complaining. Mr. and Mrs. Granger were smiling at Harry. When Hermione let him go, Mr. Granger spoke.

"Sorry for being so brutal there but Hermione wanted her best friend over for the remainder of the summer and it seemed like a good plan."

"Of course! I'll still cut both lawns to make it seem more realistic. It's the least I can do to thank you."

Before the Grangers could reply Hermione cut in "Harry let me show you your room!"

She pulled him upstairs and opened a door. It was cozy, he could tell that was for certain. It had a wooden desk; a chair next to it; a dresser with a mirror on it, and a queen size bed! This was far better than Dudley's second room. She pulled him over to a door on the side of the room. When she opened it, it was a bathroom. It was huge. It had a huge shower, a Jacuzzi bath, and a marble shower. Harry stood there with his mouth hanging open. "I think it's too much for me to have by myself, so I thought we could share it. Is that okay wit you?"

Harry just nodded dumbly. As he was led to Hermione's Room. Her room was pretty much the same bust twice as big with huge bookshelves and an entertainment center. She led him back to his room to unpack. About halfway through his bag she asked, "So Harry. What do you want to do for the rest of the summer? I personally think we should catch up more. I know we talked for hours last night but... there has to be something we forgot. "

"Oh! well... We could talk about things outside of school if you want. Although I pretty much covered everything." After a long silence Harry asked "Do you have any specific questions?"

Hermione had a question in mind but she didn't want him to think negatively about her. *Oh to hell with it.* "Have you ever had a girlfriend Harry?"

Harry asked “Do you have any specific questions?”

Hermione had a question in mind but she didn’t want to seem too obvious. Oh to hell with it. “Have you ever had a girlfriend?”

Chapter 5: The Lake

“W...w...Wha?” Harry never thought that would be the questions she asked.

Hermione was a little embarrassed by his reaction but she wasn’t in, or going to be in, Gryffindor for nothing. So she pulled up a lot of courage and failed miserably at trying not to sound scared of his answer. “I asked if you ever had a girlfriend. You know someone that you’ve went out with. You know held hands. Maybe even kissed?”

I can’t believe she is asking me this!

Maybe she likes me?

Maybe she wants to know just because she’s my best friend and we’re supposed to talk about this stuff.

Oh just answer Potter!

“Erm. No. At the beginning of the school year girls threw themselves at me; older and younger girls. I didn’t want them though, I mean, I was 11. Although that’s not really an excuse. Ron was eleven and he thought that in the right light, with squinted eyes McGonagall looked fit.” This is the point where Harry and Hermione look like they’re about to blow chunks. “Even then I knew I wanted to have a girl that wants me for me. Until then, I’m a free man...boy. A free man-boy. Why did you want to know?” After embarrassing himself enough, he decided to turn it over to Hermione.

“No real reason. I just hoped you never dated anyone.”

“But why? Why did you want to know? Why would you *hope* I never dated anyone?”

Oh no. Just think of something Hermione! He's smarter than you remember; he would have never caught that 'hope' slip up. I've crushed on Harry since we were seven. I'm not gonna scare him away now. "Here's the thing Harry. Your aunt and uncle...and other aunt, are trying to get me with Dudley. I'll have you know that I most definitely don't want to be with him. I was hoping that maybe we could pretend to date only in front of Dudley so he could back off." Hermione was really quiet while explaining the last part.

"Erm... I don't know if that a good idea." Hermione's face fell "Not that I wouldn't mind *pretending* to be your boyfriend. It's just that the Dursley's are still my guardians and if they see us dating...um... pretending and having fun they will make me go back and I'll be in soooo much trouble for stealing a girl that Dudley wants." Harry couldn't help but feel a little sad. ***She only wanted to know because she doesn't want to be with Dudley.***

"Well that's what my parents want to talk to you about later. How about I ask again when we get back?"

Get Back? Where are we going? Would it be hard pretending to be her boyfriend? I mean she is my best friend. She attractive...in a friendly way. But what about the Dursley's. Yeah. They will kill me for sure.

"HARRY!"

"What you say?"

"My parents are calling us. Take off the tux jacket and the tie. And unbutton the top few and you look casual dress. Now let's go."

Harry was beyond confused when he got downstairs. He was 'casual dressed' as Hermione put it. He knew they all were going somewhere...at 10 o'clock at night, he just didn't know where. Lastly he was afraid of what her parents wanted to talk to him about. He was a complete mess the whole ride. He was so lost in his thoughts that he didn't notice when they arrived.

Mr. Granger cleared his throat to get Harry's attention and looked at him through the rearview mirror. "This is the part where you pull that

little handle and jump out of the car." Harry chuckled nervously and got out of the car. They were at a lake. This lake had ice cream booths, restaurants, and all kinds of shops surrounding it. Harry was in awe. The Grangers walked to an ice cream parlor and Harry followed Hermione; she ushered Harry to a seat while her parents went to pick out a treat. They were sitting outside with the warm breeze and a beautiful view of the lake brightened by the city lights.

"Harry. Don't be so nervous. We're not gonna throw you in the lake or anything. We're having a family night out. Just relax." Harry was enthused to be considered a part of the family. Mr. and Mrs. Granger came back with four huge sundaes. Harry had to control himself from making a mess of himself by drooling. He hadn't had any sweets since Hogwarts. A whole five weeks! That is far too long for a 12 year old boy. Mr. Granger was looking at Harry oddly. Harry was getting a little nervous under the older man's stare. He was startled when Mr. Granger finally spoke up.

"Harry. Hermione spoke to us this morning about the Dursley's. We were warned on how they treat you. Actually Hermione was reluctant to tell us but we knew whatever it was, it was important, so threatened to not let her go to Hogwarts this year if she wasn't being honest with us."

At these words Hermione gave an apologetic smile. Harry smiled back signaling that it was okay and he wasn't mad at her for telling her parents. If he had to choose he would have done the same thing.

"So we know that the information she told us about the Dursley's will keep you out of that house. The law enforcements will not allow you to be subject to that kind of abuse. If you had told sooner we would have took you in earlier." Harry and Hermione both looked disappointed that they could have never been separated all those years. "We want you out of there, but we don't want you just anywhere. We want you to move in with us. Now we don't want to be your parents; we could never take their place. But we do want to be your guardians. In the sense that you look up to us for advise... Erm I can't really explain it."

"Harry, my husband and I want to get you emancipated and offer you a room living with us as an adult. Of course there will be house responsibilities like chores and respect, but you will be able to make your own decisions. We feel you deserve it after being with the Dursley's all this time; you deserve to be called an adult. We only ask for your respect in return... oh and keep Hermione's head out of the books... What parent ever thought they'd say that? But we will provide everything for you, like you were our own son. So, what do you say?" Mrs. Granger explained like a school teacher.

Harry sat there soaking everything in. He looked at Hermione who was absolutely loosing her mind waiting on Harry's answer. The older Grangers looked just as frantic as Hermione. "Mr. Granger. Mrs. Granger. Hermione. I don't know if I can accept your offer."

"What! Harry, why!"

"Hermione, Dumbledore has me on a short leash. He won't allow me to go anywhere. I asked if I could go to Ron's for the summer he said 'No. trust me Harry I have my reasons.' Even if Dumbledore said yes, who in their right mind would emancipate me? I'm 12 years old. Am I really mature enough to be an adult? I found out that my parents left me enough money to live comfortably until I'm 17 and the heritage galleons come in after, but they wouldn't think I'm responsible enough to be emancipated. Sorry everyone, but the plan wouldn't work."

For a second there I thought I would have a normal life. But there is always something holding me back. Voldemort took my parents, I'm in the spotlight, now Dumbledore won't allow me summer fun. This sucks!

"Harry!" he snapped his head toward Hermione wondering what was wrong. "You've got to stop zoning out like that! I can't tell if you're listening to me until I'm done talking. I literally ramble on and on and you never hear what I say!"

Harry had the decency to blush when the Grangers snickered at their daughter reprimanding Harry. Not wanting to get another lecture Harry mumbled "Sorry Hermione" and gave her all of his attention.

"Now, I know you may not be happy about this but you can use your fame in the wizarding world to get emancipated. After all you are a hero there. They'll probably think they owe it to you. And I know there are ties with the wizarding world and the muggle world so maybe if you're an adult there they can make you one here too. But the information about Professor Dumbledore is new to me. I can ask if he can explain why you can't stay with us and maybe we all can figure out a solution." Harry still looked skeptical but he was slowly giving in. "Please Harry. If Professor Dumbledore says yes will you do it?"

"Yeah. I'd love to live with you guys but I **will** pay my dues. If I'm gonna be an adult; I'm gonna pay for my stay at your home. But I really would love for you to tell me if I'm doing wrong. Don't be afraid to be *like* my parents. I know they're gone but, I'll respect you the same. I guess I'm saying I really want to be a kid, but I will not throw away the fact that I have adult responsibilities." Harry finished with determination and confidence they didn't know he possessed.

The Granger's admiration for the boy went up a notch when Harry offered to 'pay his dues'. They didn't understand why he didn't think he was mature enough. Any other kid would have no problem living free off other people while legally being called an adult. This boy sitting in front of them proved his maturation when he asked if he was mature enough. To even think of that as a possibility showed responsibility in their eyes. The doctors Granger heard plenty of their friends talking about their kids saying "I can't wait to be grown" or "I can't wait to live on my own". They never expected it from their Hermione but she said it when she wasn't allowed to get a state of the art library built in the basement. Then here is a boy that has every reason to want to be an adult, and he just wants to be a kid; a very responsible kid.

Hermione broke the silence, "Getting professor Dumbledore to agree will be the hard part. But we'll write a letter tomorrow. Until then, we can enjoy these great desserts."

After the dessert, they sat along the lake and talked about Hogwarts. And played games like Concentration (does anyone still play that game?). When they got back, Harry thanked the Grangers for taking him on their family outing. The Grangers were getting tired of being

called sir and maam so they told him to call them by their names, Rachael and Tim.

Later that night when Harry settled into bed in his soon to be official room, he thought about how this was one of the first times he was truly happy. He was getting ready to fall into a peaceful sleep when he thought about the question Hermione asked earlier. ***Should I pretend to be her boyfriend in front of Dudley? It would work out well if everything goes according to plan. I guess we'll talk about it tomorrow...*** Before Harry could finish his thoughts he was asleep.

Should I pretend to be her boyfriend in front of Dudley? It would work out well if everything goes according to plan. I guess we'll talk about it tomorrow... Before Harry could finish his thoughts he was asleep.

Chapter 6:Letters and Kisses

Harry awoke early, and completely refreshed. He walked around the house and noticed all three of the Grangers were still asleep. ***Maybe I should mow the lawn. That would keep up the act so the Dursley's won't be suspicious. But that would wake them up.*** Harry walked out in the Granger's back yard. After searching for the lawn mower, that was conveniently already out, Harry mowed the front and back yard. After he finished, he noticed dear ol' Uncle Vernon standing by the fence...or where it would have been.

"Get over here boy!"

Harry trudged over to the beefy man and said "Yes uncle"

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" Vernon grabbed a hold of Harry's throat and held it tight enough for Harry to barely sputter out an answer.

"I'm mowing the lawn like you said I would" Harry was starting to feel faint. Vernon was literally choking the life out of him with one fat hand.

"You will trim the hedges, pick the weeds, and paint the shed. There will be no shortcomings boy! We want the neighbors to think you're respectable. They probably had to force you up. If I get any bad reports you will sleep in the cupboard next year, for the whole year. And That Girl! She is not the friend you used to have. If she is displeased with you, I'll take it as bad as her parents being pissed. Now get over..."

Vernon was cut off by a waving Mrs. Granger. "Oh hello Vernon. The boy is going in the house and cooking us breakfast. Later he will paint our daughter's room." Then she looked pointedly at Harry and said, "There will be no funny business under my roof. If you touch my daughter, you will be sent back immediately." Vernon was smirking giving her look clearly stating that she did a good job.

Harry on the other hand was confused. ***Did Rachael know about what Hermione had planned? Oh no. They may want to give me the talk. It was bad enough hearing part of what they told Dudley.***

"What are you still standing there for? Leave. And I like my bacon well done." Harry obediently walked away to start breakfast. As Harry stepped into the Granger's kitchen he smelled ***Food! Delicious smelling Food! Mrs. Granger deserves an Oscar.***

He walked into the kitchen and saw Hermione and her father sitting around the table. Tim was reading the paper while sipping on his coffee. Hermione was a sight for sore eyes... literally. Her hair had a mind of it own. Her eyes were barely open and she looked like she was at the worst part of a fever. "Good morning Tim! Hermione."

Tim put the paper down and smiled at Harry. "Great day isn't it Harry?" He couldn't help but smile at Harry when he sat down across from his daughter and reached out with caution to get a piece of toast from the center of the table. "Hermione. Harry said good morning. Aren't you going to respond?"

"Morn...day...people...too early for smiling...sleep" was the reply before Hermione slowly got up and went back to her room for more sleep.

"Harry, don't be afraid. Hermione is not a morning person. It's 7:30 in the morning. On her summer schedule this is torture. Her mother wakes her up to eat and she usually fall back to sleep right after she's done eating. She hates the world in the mornings. But we suggest you go and wake her at about 10:30; otherwise she will sleep till 3 in the afternoon. During school and tutoring she's up at 6:30am but let the professionals wake her during the summer before 10" Mr. Granger's face suddenly became very grim and serious "I must warn you Harry. She will hurt you if you wake her before..."

Rachael walked up behind her husband and swatted him in the back of the head.

"Tim! Quit scaring the poor boy... but seriously Harry don't even make an attempt"

Both Grangers burst out laughing at the look of horror on his face. After a fearful breakfast Harry said goodbye to the Grangers as they left for work. ***Well I guess I'll take a shower.*** After a great shower Harry wrote a letter to Ron.

To Ron,

What's up mate! It's been a while since I got a letter from you and I decided to write you to let you know what has been going on. The beginning of the summer was horrible. The Dursley's were the same crazy people they were before. But everything is going to change if Dumbledore approves. Do you remember when I told you about a girl I met when I was seven and we became best friends? Well she's back! Her parents want to get me emancipated and let me live with them. We are going to write a letter to Dumbledore and ask for his permission today. I'll write another letter telling you what he said.

Harry

P.S Tell the rest of the Weasley's I said hi. Later mate.

He sent the letter off with a school owl that he summoned and hoped he would be back by the time they were finished composing a letter. It was 10:45 and Harry decided to cautiously wake Hermione. This consisted of him standing in her doorway saying "Pssst. Psssssst. Hermione. Hermione wake up. PROFESSOR MCGONNAGALL IS HERE!" Hermione shot up saying she didn't know it was September yet. When she saw Harry laughing she got up and chased him into the living room (sitting room, family room whatever).

"Okay Harry. There is no way to go. You're cornered" Harry narrowed his eyes and Hermione narrowed hers. Before he could blink Hermione tackled him onto the couch and straddled him while holding down his arms.

"Ha. I got you! And you said you were seeker? I'm pretty sure I'm bigger than a snitch..."

Harry wasn't paying any attention to a thing she was saying. ***For Merlin's sake she's sitting on me. Ok breathe Potter. Oh come off it! Who can breathe with a girl in pajamas sitting on you!***

Think of something disgusting! Think of Snape in panties. Dumbledore in panties. Dudley in panties. Hermione in ...NO! Marge in her thong...That only made me want to gag.

"Harr...oh!...erm. I'll just go get dressed for the day um yeah. That's what I'll do." Then she rushed upstairs and he heard her door slam shut.

Harry was absolutely mortified. Hermione must have noticed. **No use in crying now Potter! Just talk it out with her like a responsible adult. Easier said than done. I should be a bloody Hufflepuff.**

After thirty minutes of torture Harry's wimpy side won the round. He was slumped over looking like he just lost his best friend. Hermione walked down the stairs and sat next to him on the couch. **Why is she so calm? I'll go back to the Dursley's to keep her away from a freak like me.**

"Harry. What happened earlier was a natural mistake. My mum gave me the talk a while ago and I was mostly at fault. I was barely wearing anything and I was on top of you. It's only natural that you had a ...reaction. Don't be ashamed to be yourself. I won't ever hate you no matter what. I'm always going to be there for you and there is no reason for you to want to push yourself away from me."

Harry was shocked; she knew exactly how he was feeling and she still wanted to be his friend. He had no idea what came over him but he leaned in and kissed her; right on the lips. He was going to pull away until he felt her responding back. After the best three seconds he ever experienced he looked her in the face to see her reaction. She had her eyes drooped with a dreamy look on her face and a small smile playing at the corner of her lips. When she noticed him staring at her with an 'I made you look like that, and I'm satisfied because now I feel alfa male-ish' smirk on his face, she blushed.

"I guess I have to give speeches like that more often" They sat around for a few minutes like two preteens who just had their first kiss. That means they kept sneaking glances at each other and would blush when they caught the other looking. "Um Harry. I like you."

"I like you to Hermione"

“No. I like you, like you.”

“I like you, like you too.”

“So what does this mean? Are we gonna date or...something?”

“Well. I guess it’s complicated” When he saw Hermione look hurt and confused he tried to explain it better. “It’s not that I don’t want to be your boyfriend, but there would be a few problems. Your parents being one. How do I know they will let me stay? They may not want us together. We’re twelve; they may ship me back off to the Dursley’s. The second thing is the wizarding world. There are a lot of people who followed Voldemort and I don’t want you hurt; not only that, but I’m pretty famous like I told you they will all know you too. And then there is the fact that I don’t know the first thing about dating.”

“Harry my parents will accept it. I told them the morning after we spoke under your tree that I knew I liked you, so they shouldn’t be a problem. I wouldn’t push away because of crazy people. But I know you won’t allow anything that could possibly hurt me. So maybe we can only tell a few people we’re together. And you most definitely know how to be a boyfriend. You’ve been nothing but kind to me since the day we met... I’m more than willing to give us a try.” Harry didn’t miss the shouldn’t when she was talking about her parents but he dismissed it.

“I’d like that too. But you gotta let me know when I’m doing something wrong. And I really can’t sacrifice telling anyone. Would it be bad if we kept it secret when we get to school?” Hermione nodded her head in agreement and gave him another chaste kiss. She grabbed his hand and pulled him up the stairs to her room.

Harry being a boy wondered ***How fast is this relationship moving?***

Hermione sat at her desk and pulled out paper and a pen. “Harry stop looking at the bed! I’m writing a letter to Professor Dumbledore!”

“Um Hermione? I’m not sure that he is used to getting letters on paper. On second thought he’s kinda weird so go ahead.”

Dear Headmaster Dumbledore,

My name is Hermione Granger, we met almost a year ago when you told me about the wizarding world. It turns out that Harry Potter is my best friend. We are writing this letter to ask permission for Harry to live at my house. My parents and I think it would be best if he can get emancipated. The Dursley's put him through more than enough torture and we believe it's time for that to end. No one deserves to be treated like a slave in their own home by their family. So we will patiently wait for your response.

Harry Potter and Hermione Granger

"Harry can I borrow your owl?"

"I sent her to Ron's for the summer, but I'm waiting for an owl I summoned from school. He should be back in a min...." Before Harry could finish his sentence a big brown tapped on the window. Hermione let the owl in and untied the letter addressed to Harry. She tied the other letter to the owl's leg and set him off.

Harry read his letter out loud.

Hey Harry,

I can't say I'm exactly happy about your letter. You're telling me about a new friend. I was supposed to be the one you talked to. But after mum gave me a good chewing out I realized how stupid I was being. I can't wait to meet her. We can all be friends. Hope things go well with Dumbledore. See you in September mate.

Me,

P.S. Is she a looker. Because I could use a girlfriend; and from what you used to say about her, she's my type. Maybe you can date my sister and we can double date. Talk to her for me; okay?

Harry couldn't help but scowl at that last part. He sat the letter down and sat next to the laughing Hermione on her small couch in front of her tv. "Don't worry Harry, he doesn't seem like my type. Besides I'm with you. Now all we have to do is wait on Dumbledore's response"

***This is the life. I have a girlfriend and a best friend all in one.
Nothing can ruin this day.***

“And don’t forget we have to tell my parents tomorrow.”

So much for the day not being ruined.

This is the life. I have a girlfriend and a best friend all in one. Nothing can ruin this day.

“And don’t forget we have to tell my parents tomorrow.”

So much for the day not being ruined.

Chapter 7: Many Happenings

“AAAAAAHHHHHHH!” Mrs. Granger screamed.

“Oh no no no no no no no no” came a squeaky voice

“Honey, kill it” CLUMP! BANG! BOOM! BAM! SHATTER!

Then there was silence. Not just silence. But a complete, eerie, nothingness of silence. After being startled awake by the commotion downstairs Harry jumped out of his bed and dashed into the hallway only to fall flat on his butt after running into an equally startled Hermione. They both got up and ran downstairs and stood shocked at the spectacle before them.

Mr. and Mrs. Granger were frozen in mid air. Mrs. Granger stood with one toe on the couch; it was obvious that she was about to jump, and she had her hands in front of her mouth with a look that clearly exclaimed ‘I’m scared because I don’t know what the hell it is, so I’ll scream while you attack’. Mr. Granger was standing in front of his wife with a tea pot in his hand and a look on his face that said ‘I’m scared of it as much as you but I don’t want to look like a coward so this tea pot will do, if not we’re screwed’.

After looking at each other questioningly, Harry and Hermione took a few steps closer to the couch to see what could have caused the fright her parents were in. They saw a little ball with pointed ears and a potato sack. Harry bent over and poked it with his wand and it jumped up crying. It snatched the tea pot from Mr. Granger’s stiff hands and hit himself in the head with it.

“Dobby is so sorry sir. Dobby didn’t mean to curse the muggles. Dobby just protecting Harry Potter sir.” Hermione clung to Harry’s arm and had wide eyes. She knew it was a magical house elf. She read

all about them in Hogwarts: A History, but that didn't mean she was ready to touch it or even see it personally.

Harry on the other hand was wondering what a house elf wanted him for. "Do I know this.....it... you?"

It stopped hitting itself and turned to Harry with a look of admiration in its eyes. "No. But I know you Harry Potter sir! You are the Boy-Who-Lived. But Dobby is here to warn you sir. You must not go to Hogwarts this year. Something bad will seek you"

"Um Dobby right? Can you explain a little more?" Hermione was now interested and wanted to know about the weird warning.

"Who are you missus?"

"I'm Hermione. I'm Harry's friend. His best friend. Now a little more detail...if you can."

"Dobby can't say exactly. Dobby's master told dobby not to"

Harry was a little frustrated and wanted to know what the little elf was talking about. "What can't you just tell me? It's not that hard. You're not a puppet! You're a human ... thing!"

"Harry, he is bonded to his master. If his master specifically tells him not to tell anyone about something, he is forced to obey by magic." She turned to Dobby and said, "I'm assuming that he didn't tell you not to warn us. He just told you not to tell what the big secret is. You like Harry because he's 'the boy who lived' so you took it upon yourself to find a loophole in your masters plan to get to Harry before it's too late." She finished with an 'I know I'm right so just let it settle for a bit' smirk.

Dobby's eyes got wide and sparkled with admiration for Hermione. "Harry's missus is a very intelligent girl. Dobby will like Harry and his Her.. Herm.. Hermoney."

Harry laughed at Dobby's pronunciation of Hermione's name, while she glared at him and elbowed Harry. Harry got serious and said "Dobby. I can't *not* go to school. I have to be there. But I will be extra

extra extra careful. Okay?" Dobby nodded yes. "Now can you unfreeze the Grangers?"

Dobby did as told. Tim swung his hand forward only to realize that the teapot wasn't in his hand anymore. Rachael finished her scream and looked just as confused as her husband. Dobby looked at Harry and Hermione and smiled before he popped away.

"Mum. Dad. We need to talk." The older Grangers spun around and nodded a startled affirmative and headed to the kitchen with confusion etched in their faces. Harry looked nervously at Hermione and followed her parents into the kitchen.

To say they were concerned would be an understatement. The Grangers were downright scared for Harry. Their daughter explained about the house elf and the warning he gave Harry. They all wanted to know what was so dangerous at Hogwarts that Dobby needed to unofficially disobey his master to get to Harry.

"Well Harry, all we can tell you is to do your best to stay safe." Rachael said soothingly.

"And don't forget to protect your best friend over here. If she is with you we want you both to be safe. On second thought are you sure you want to go Hermione? You would be an excellent dentist" Rachael kicked her husband and gave him a reproachful look.

"Mum Dad, Harry and I would like to talk to you about something." She started to get nervous when she realized what she was going to do. "Don't we Harry". The Grangers line of sight switched from Hermione to Harry. Harry looked like a deer caught in the headlights. After a couple of seconds of watching Harry gape like a fish, Hermione decided she would continue the news. "Well, Harry and I are best friends. But we've couldn't help but notice that we are of the opposite sex, and when two people of the opposite sex like each other they....wait no that what you said when you gave me the sex talk. Ok let me start over. When two people..."

"Hermione and I are dating" Harry couldn't stand it anymore. Tim looked like he was going to kill Harry when Hermione drifted on the

subject. Hermione watched her parents to see if she could read their reactions.

Rachael finally spoke up "Well. I would be lying if I said I didn't see that coming."

Tim let out a breath of relief "Whoo, you scared me for a minute there. I thought you were telling me that you had...you know. But we must reconsider where Harry's room is"

"I think they are responsible enough to share a bathroom. We'll just watch them like a hawk watches his prey"

Hermione smiled at Harry and mouthed 'I told you so'.

"How about we initiate Harry into the family"

Tim looked at his wife giving a signal and she asked "Are you sure Tim?" He nodded yes.

Harry couldn't help but notice Hermione's smile was no longer there and she looked down right depressed. Tim and Rachael each grabbed a hold of Harry's arms and took him to the living room. He took one last look back at his girlfriend and she put on a poor attempt of a smile. **What have I gotten myself into?**

Harry was in tears when the Grangers finished with him. By night, he saw every embarrassing picture of Hermione and he laughed at every one. Especially the story behind the picture of a two year old Hermione sitting on the potty with her hand under her chin and a look of concentration on her face. It had a label under it called "The Thinker". Rachael said "Hermione had a problem with using the big girl potty; she thought the toilet would eat her up. So we told her when she sits and have to go, just think of anything that has nothing to do with the potty being alive. When she finished we asked if our advice helped. She said no because all the time she was thinking the potty wouldn't eat her if it was filled with poo!"

Hermione scowled in the corner as Harry fell off the couch with laughter. Before she could get up and hit him a knock came from the

door. Tim answered and there was Albus Dumbledore. "I hope I'm not interrupting but I do need to speak with Harry alone"

"If its ok professor I'd like the Grangers to hear what you have to say it concerns them as much as it does me. After all, it is their home."

"Very well Harry. I can not allow you to stay at the Granger household"

"WHAT WHY!"

"Please watch your tone Ms. Granger. There are protection ward in place at number 4 and Harry is in dire need of these protections."

Tim spoke up "Why can't you move them here?"

"They are blood protections. Harry's mother saved him by loving him. Her blood is needed"

Hermione huffed "well that makes no sense. Harry's mother is dead...um sorry Harry. How can her blood be in that house? Even Mrs. Dursley would not have the exact blood that saved Harry."

"I assure you Ms. Granger her sister's love saved Harry and that blood lies in Petunia. You can call it her love blood. And it is in the bloodline"

Harry was starting to understand where Hermione was going with this. "But how can her blood save me. My mum saved me because of HER love. Petunia has nothing to do with it. Even if so, Aunt Petunia hates me. If anything the wards are now longer active. For all we know her hate for me could have cancelled my mum's ...erm...love blood as you put it"

"Harry. Try to understand that after this year's events I cannot allow you to be harmed by Voldemort. You have no other choice. You shall be back at the Dursley's soon enough. Now pack you bags and we can go back" Harry felt he lost the battle. He walked to the stairs because Dumbledore sounded like nothing could change his mind until Hermione startled them all.

“THEY BEAT HIM!”

Dumbledore turned around not quite believing what he heard. “What did you say Ms. Granger?”

She couldn’t take it anymore and broke down crying on the floor. Her parents rushed to her side and kneeled next to their sobbing daughter while whispering soothing words in her ears.

Harry bowed his head in shame. ***This is not how I wanted him to find out. I'm the bloody Boy-Who-Lived! If everyone finds my muggle relatives beat me, I'll be in the papers and get their pity...or some people like Malfoy will taunt me.***

“Ms. Granger I asked you to repeat what you said!”

“Don’t yell at my daughter! She is obviously distraught!” Mrs. Granger stood in Dumbledore’s face and held her ground. Dumbledore looked completely shocked by the woman’s show of courage.

Mr. Granger had stayed to calm his daughter down. He knew his wife could stand up to a man; ***Oh sure, she's not afraid of a magical, powerful, wise wizard, but nearly died from seeing an elf thingy.*** Hermione suddenly stood up startling him from his thoughts.

“I said they beat and abuse Harry. He’s spent his whole life working like a slave in that house. He gets emotionally abused, malnourished, and locked in a cupboard. Want to know why? It’s because you left him there. He told me you left him with the Dursley’s. What kind of respectable person would take a baby boy from the magical world he belongs in, just to DUMP him on some fat man’s stoop! I’ll tell you what kind; the stupid old man that thinks he knows it all!”

Merlin! Hermione just told Dumbledore off. I was wondering why she was in Gryffindor. I think I'm in love. Harry wiped the goofy grin off his face when he realized everyone was expecting him to say something next.

“Listen professor. I am not just going to sit here and say I’m the same boy you knew last year. I’ve only been here for a few days and I’ve been shown everything I’ve missed growing up with the Dursley’s. I

still have to work on trying not to think of myself as a little house elf, but I will improve." Seeing that Dumbledore was unmoving, Harry added, "If I just so happen to do a little accidental magic, the Dursley's, as my legal guardians, will keep me here and not allow me back in Hogwarts." Harry gave himself a mental pat on the back when he saw Dumbledore's eyes widen at the thought of Harry never returning to school. "Now, if I could get emancipated in both worlds, get protective wards over this house, and take extra precautions to maintain our safety then I will be sure to return to Hogwarts. Until then, I am home with the Dursley's"

The shock on Dumbledore's face never went away. Here were two soon to be second years giving him demands that he could not refuse. Harry being an adult meant he would instantly get access of the prophecy; they would send it from the department of Mysteries. He had to tell him now "Harry. I will agree to your terms on one condition. You will train with special trainers that I will provide during the school year. You see Harry, there is a prophecy. All in all, it all comes down to you and Voldemort. One of you must die at the hands of the other. If you win, both worlds survive. If you lose... the outcome will be devastating in his hands. I'm telling you this now because my plan was to train you when you were old enough to do this on your own. But now that you know, you can train willingly and start earlier. There is also a part about having a power he knows not. I am not certain what it is but I have a suspicion that it is love. Your mother used love to save you and he does not posses an ounce of it in his soul. I will leave you Harry, but I will contact you tomorrow about the emancipation and if it goes through." When Harry and the Grangers stood looking at Dumbledore, he added "I'll leave you to discuss this and let it settle. Have a good day"

Dumbledore left quickly, hoping to rebuild his relationship with Harry by getting his emancipation finalized. Not to mention the dignity he lost when 'the most powerful wizard alive' was word-bullied by two 12 year olds. He knew had to call an emergency Order meeting to let them know everything that transpired that night.

Number three was quiet. Everyone was in deep thought. "I'm sorry I bought you all into this. I can move out on my own and keep you all out of harms way. I always suspected he wanted me for something so

I'm not really surprised. But I will train when necessary to defeat him. Tomorrow I'll leave either back to the Dursley's or to a new place. I just don't want you hurt."

Tim looked at Harry, stood up and hugged the young man. "This is a major responsibility. We now know that the fate of the world depends on you. But we will not let you lose the rest of your childhood. Every summer and winter that you're here you will be a kid. A regular kid, with a regular family and girlfriend. By the way, I never told you I completely approve of your relationship. However, you can also expect to have a regular father invading your privacy and giving threats every chance he gets because you are dating his only daughter."

"And like I stated while I was speaking with fatty...I meant Vernon. NO funny business will happen under this roof."

Rachael smirked at Harry with a look that said 'yeah that message was for you that day. I knew you two will be together soon'

Harry look at Hermione hoping she would say something...anything.

She smiled at Harry and said "I told you they would be okay with us being together" Harry smiled as she walked up to him and gave him a small kiss on the lips.

"OH GOD NOOOOO!" Harry and Hermione snapped their head to her dad. He had his hands covering his eyes. He was rocking back and forth saying "it's too soon. It's too soon. I shouldn't be seeing this. I shouldn't be seeing this."

Her mother shook her head at her husband's antics. "Maybe you shouldn't kiss in front of him until you're married" This made the two blush bright red at the thought of being married.

She walked over and grabbed Tim's arm and led him upstairs while he kept mumbling "It's too soon. It's too soon. I shouldn't be seeing this. I shouldn't be seeing this."

"You two should get to bed. Goodnight"

“Night mum”

“G’night Mrs. ... Rachael”

When they heard the door close they walked silently up to their rooms stopping at Hermione’s first. “Harry, I just want you to know that I’m by your side no matter what. Okay?”

Harry nodded and leaned in and gave her a soft kiss. She responded back with desperation. She needed him to know she would always be there. When they pulled back out of breath, she looked at him and blushed while saying goodnight. Harry walked back to his room with a dreamy look on his face. He nearly fell on top of his trunk thinking about the kiss he just experienced.

When Harry was ready for bed and was almost asleep he heard a tapping at the window. Hedwig was perched on the sill with a red envelope tied to her leg. ***Why would the Weasley’s send her back? And what’s on her leg. That looks like a HOWLER!***

Chapter 8: Too Much Yelling!

Harry walked over to the window and net Hedwig in. she flew to his shoulder and nipped his ear affectionately. "Hey girl. Did you miss me?" She hooted and bobbed her head. "I missed you too girl. Were the Weasley's mad when they sent this letter?" As Harry took the letter, Hedwig cocked her head as if she was saying 'what do you think?' She flew to the window and started her search for rats, while he stood there wondering what it could be.

I better get Hermione so we can read...erm hear the letter together.

He walked through the bathroom and tapped lightly on her door. She opened the door and immediately blushed when she saw it was Harry. Before Harry got to say anything Hermione pulled him in her room and pushed him on the bed. Harry sat there confused about what she was doing. ***All of this for a letter?***

She shuffled over to her other door and peeked out into the hall towards her parents' room. When she saw that the coast was clear she blushed harder and said, "Harry I'm flattered, I really am. But I don't think it would be wise to want to stay here. I know we're dating and guys get a thrill out of disobeying their girlfriend's parents, but I don't want to get caught in a midnight cuddle with you..... Look they would have our heads if they found out."

Harry put his head down trying to hide his confusion. ***Find out? Cuddle? Thrill?***

Hermione took that as a sign of dejection. She put her hand under his chin to force him to look at her. When their eyes met, she gave him a light peck and said, "Well, maybe we can have a small snog then send you back off"

Finally realizing what she was doing a faint blush came across his face. However, she only seemed to notice his smirk that told her that she had everything wrong but he liked her idea *much* better. Realizing her mistake she turned away completely embarrassed.

Harry didn't want to make it worse by laughing so he gave her a hug and whispered in her ear "Don't worry. I wouldn't have said anything if you had come to my door at this time a night; I would have been too busy snogging you senseless. At least you had the right mind to think before you did anything." When he saw that she wasn't a red as an apple anymore, he spoke a little louder, but not loud enough to draw her parent's attention. "I got a howler from the Weasley's. I wanted to open it with you because last year when Ron got one it burst into flames after it was finished speaking and that was the end of it."

"Why did he get a howler?"

"I'll tell you later but let's go somewhere to listen to this."

Hermione nodded and grabbed his hand. She led him to the back yard and into the shed. They looked at the letter and Harry slowly broke the seal. The little red envelope turned into four rigid mouths and the first one started to speak.

"Harry Potter! How dare you force headmaster Dumbledore to let you stay with some girl you don't even know!"

Another less furious looking pair of lip floated forward and said, "Dear Harry is a good boy and a darn good judge of character. He must trust her and we should too"

"Who asked you Arthur? He doesn't know what's best for him" The rigid Weasley replied.

"Honey, we have to trust Harry. And if you don't we can lose him forever."

The other floating mouth spoke up but it sounded distant. "Harry is going to stay with a girl! That's no fair! I want to go too mum. I can't believe he didn't tell me. We're supposed to be best mates! And he hurt mum's feeling by not wanting to stay here. Oh and Harry if you can hear me ask the girl if she thinks I'm cute. You still have that photo album Hagrid gave you on the train don't you? Show her the picture of me when I was leaning on the tree with my arms crossed making my bad boy look. No! On second thought show her the one where I had a smile. Fred and George gave you that picture with of

me. They said girls like some thing that muggles call The Mad Boy. Since she's muggle she should like it!"

The smallest mouth danced around the mouth that they assumed was Ron's and teased him saying "Ron you looked like a monkey in that picture. Monkey, Monkey, ha ha, ha ha."

"You look like a monkey!"

"Ronald and Ginerva get back in your room!"

Both little mouths quivered and disappeared after saying "Yes mum"

The rigid mouth softened and said "I'm sorry Harry dear. Arthur was right. I was just upset that you didn't want to stay with us. But promise me you will see us before the end of the summer. Well, I leave you now. Once again I'm sorry." Then the last two mouths disappeared.

Harry and Hermione looked at each other. Then they jumped when the letter burst into flames.

"Well that was interesting"

"How could she send me a howler!? It's not like I purposely meant to hurt her feelings"

"Harry she was hurt, just let it go this time."

Harry was beginning to calm down. After all, Mrs. Weasley did apologize.

"Now, why did he get a howler?"

Harry chuckled, "He told McGonagall that she was a fine looking old lady. And he wouldn't mind escorting her to the nearest broom closet! She gave him a month of detention. Ron really needs to know when to keep his thoughts to himself."

Hermione laughed and they walked back into the house in silence. They went to their rooms said goodnight and immediately fell to sleep.

NEXT DAY

Harry awoke and walked down the stairs. Hermione followed her mom, down. He chuckled when he saw the 4 week bag of luggage under her eyes. Harry stopped laughing when the food was sat at the table. Just as he was about to dig in he noticed Vernon standing at the back door.

Rachael gave Harry a nervous glance and she walked over and opened the door. Vernon was fuming. He put his beefy finger in her face and yelled, "He is supposed to be cooking you breakfast! Not the other way around!!!"

Tim stood up to the fat man and defended his wife "Now listen here Dursley, My wife cooks breakfast in my house when she wants to. AND IF YOU YELL AT HER AGAIN I'LL BREAK YOUR FAT FINGER!!!!"

Vernon was visibly scared. "I... I came here to discuss something that will affect your opinion on Harry...and your daughter." Vernon was smirking at the brief look of worry on the Grangers face. Harry was absolutely terrified. He knew when Vernon made that look it meant He was in trouble...or was going to be.

"Last night I got up to get a midnight snack and I peeked out my window. I saw *your daughter* dragging that boy out to your shed. I heard loud voices and they were out when it finished. I will take Harry back and keep him out of your hands. You should do the same for your daughter if you know what's best for you."

Tim turned around and looked at Harry. If looks could kill Harry would have used all nine cat lives with that stare. Rachael was chewing on bottom lip trying to analyze any alternatives as to what could have happened in that shed. Anything other than what Vernon was implying happened.

Hermione was scared. She never thought her father would look at Harry that way. There was no real way to explain because the howler is no longer in existence. They would have to take their word for it.

Before either of them could speak Tim grabbed Harry's arm and drug him out to the shed. Rachael and Hermione ran after him, while Vernon cockily walked to his house.

When Hermione and her mom got in the shed, Tim was already yelling at Harry, “What the hell went on in here last night!? Tell me the truth! Were you in here with my daughter around midnight?!”

Harry was shaking and trying his best to hold in tears. He nodded his head yes and Tim exploded. “I trusted you two. You are twelve! I was STUPID. I let her have a boyfriend and this is what happens!!!”

“Dad it’s not what you...”

“And **YOU** Shut UP!” Hermione didn’t have the years of practice that Harry had, when it came to not showing her emotions. She burst out in tears before he finished his sentence.

“I thought you knew better! We expected more from you!! Your mum and I are very disappointed in you.” That hurt her more than it could have hurt any other child. Hermione took pride in her parents being proud of her.

Harry knew how hurt Hermione was and he wasn’t going to let anymore come out of this than it already did. “Tim!” when everybody looked at him with shock he gulped **Better not lose your nerve now Potter!** “Hermione and I never had sex. We’re twelve! Yeah we’ve made out once or twice but that was all. We were in the shed at midnight. But it was only so we can listen to a letter. I got a howler last night. It’s a letter when someone literally talks to you, most of the time they yell. I didn’t want to wake you up but I really wanted Hermione to hear it with me. The yelling you heard was Mrs. Weasley yelling at me because I told off Dumbledore and she was mad that I didn’t want to stay with her...If you are going to be mad at anyone be mad at me. You really hurt Hermione by saying you were disappointed in her, and it was all for nothing.” Harry puffed out his chest a bit to help his ego. **I’m a Gryffindor for crying out loud! I was only slightly shivering in a corner.** Oh please Potter you nearly wet yourself when he looked at you.

Rachael was proud of Harry. She knew there had to be a valid reason for what happened. Hermione was beaming! What girl wouldn’t? Her boyfriend just stood up for her, to her *father*.

Tim looked at everyone and stomped out of the shed. Instead of going into the house and sulk, like everyone thought he would, he marched over to number 4. Vernon walked out expecting Tim to be willing to return Harry and make sure he's severely punished. But oh no that's not what he got.

WHAM

Tim knocked Vernon clear into the air. When he hit the ground they were sure it was an earthquake when the ground shook.

Petunia, Dudley, Rachael, and Hermione we shocked, all for their own reason. Harry, on the other hand, was currently on the ground holding his stomach laughing like a hyena.

Hermione soon joined him, while Rachael snickered.

"You will never have custody of Harry again! We already spoke to their headmaster and the paperwork is being filed!"

Vernon's eyes widened when he mention that Dumble-bore.
"You...you are FREAKS just like the boy!"

Petunia and her son hid at the thought of them being magical.

"Who are you to call my daughter a freak? Horse-face, Shamoo, and Shamoo Jr. want to call us freaks? My daughter and Harry are far better than we'll ever be! I AM PROUD TO BE HER FATHER!"
Hermione smiled hearing her father say that. "They have powers that I never knew existed!" Oh yeah, Tim was pissed.

"What makes you think you can take him now? He is still in my custody. And when the papers are finished he may not still be alive!"
Vernon's voice was more menacing than Harry remembered.

"Because... You won't get him back. If you try to take him I will be sure to tell the police about the abuse Harry has been retrieving under your custody."

Vernon looked at Harry who was now standing behind Tim and he launched towards him. Vernon's fist connected to Harry's jaw and

Harry fell limp to the ground. Hermione ran to him and tried to wake him but he was not responsive. Tim punched Vernon in the gut and told his wife to call the police and an ambulance. He tackled the fat man and used all his body weight to hold him down.

Rachael came back saying they would be here shortly. Petunia looked like she wanted to have a go at the Granger women. But Rachael was far too intimidating for her. Dudley, however, pushed Hermione off of Harry. "You were supposed to like me you little tramp. How can you like filth like him!?" Hermione's eyes narrowed and Dudley flew against the wall. That shocked them all. Her magic was out of control.

"Don't you ever talk about him that way you obese pig"

The police arrived to see the Grangers all glaring at the quivering Dursley's and they asked "Who was it that needed help?"

While Vernon was being escorted into the police station, Harry was being checked over by a doctor in the nearest hospital.

He said Harry needed a lot of rest and be sure to give him a special prescription to help his body get the right nutrients. "This child is very much smaller than other boys his age. I would have originally thought it was genetic. But knowing that he was abused and malnourished leads me to believe that this supplement of vitamins should have him healthy in a few weeks."

When the occupants of number 3 got home they all sat in silence contemplating today's events.

"Harry I'm sorry. I should have let you both explain before I snapped. I was no better than that fat oaf. I'm really sorry."

"It's okay. I can see how it could be hard for you, and I forgive you. But if you don't mind I'm really tired and I still have a head-ach." Harry headed up to his room and was asleep before his head hit the pillow.

"I'm sorry to you too Hermione. I was wrong about everything..."

There was a knock on the door. Rachael answered, "Headmaster! What a surprise! We were just settling in for the night."

"Oh I won't be long." Sensing the gloom in the room Dumbledore asked "Is there something that happened?"

"My husband was involved in a fight with Vernon. He knocked Harry out. He is now in jail awaiting trial. Harry is upstairs resting. Is there something specific that you wanted?"

Dumbledore actually looked concerned. "Is Harry ok?" When they nodded yes, he continued. "I brought these papers over one is to finalize the emancipation in this world and the other is an accidental magic report. Don't worry Ms. Granger it has been taken care of. The wizarding world has already acknowledged Harry as an adult. Fudge wanted his public to know he was there for their savior who only wanted one thing in return. So I told him about Harry's request and he was happy to oblige. Now if Petunia could sign these papers it would be final. I just came by to let him know he is in the final step and he could celebrate in the morning."

"How do you know she will sign?" Hermione asked.

"I have my ways Mrs. Granger. Now I will leave you to rest. Goodnight."

Hermione told her parents goodnight and went to bed. Tim looked at his wife and she cuddled under his arm. She placed her head on his shoulder and said "I love Harry like he has been with us all his life. Like I love your daughter." She looked at her husband lovingly and said "I love you more than anything in the world" Tim appeared to be in deep thought.

He looked his wife in the eyes and said "I really hit him good didn't I?" She rolled her eyes at his lack of emotion and excess maleness. As she headed upstairs she heard him still going on. "He was a big man and I beat him up? Honey? Honey? Aw come on I was gonna say I loved you too! You know it was a good hit! Both of them! I'm sorry again then. For the third time tonight I'm sorry"

She kept her back to him as she walked to their room and smirked; because she knew he was going to say sorry in more than one way tonight. Yeah she still had him wrapped around her finger.

Chapter 9: The Weasley Bunch

He was lost. He was squirming around in a dark damp place and he didn't understand what he was looking for. He made a lot of turns and dips; what made matters even worse, he couldn't stop if he wanted to. Harry tried to get any sign that told him where he was. It was dark, cold, and wet. He didn't recognize anything! At the most it looked like a cave. Better yet, it looks like a large sewer.

Before he could really begin to argue with himself he stopped. He took a look around and saw a huge head that looked like it was built into the wall. It had snakes as the hair and it looked straight ahead. It was about 50 feet tall and Harry wanted to get a better look at it. He tried to lift his head but instead he seemed to rise 40 feet at eyelevel. Harry lowered himself trying to think of what animal he could be. Out the shadows of the...dark watery place, a figure appeared. As the figure got closer, Harry was able to see it was a man. A young man. With Slytherin robes. He stomped over to Harry and stood face to face with him.

"WHAT do you think your doing? You are supposed to be in your room for the night! Go! And if you disobey me again I'll kill you quicker than you can sputter an apology. IS THAT UNDERSTOOD!!!???"

Harry awoke in a start. His scar was stinging; it wasn't as painful as when he met Voldemort and Quirrell, but it still hurt. He could see the sun trying to peek it way through the curtains so he didn't mind waking up a little earlier. Ron snoring was killing him though.

Harry had been at the Weasley's for about 6 hours. He and Hermione arrived the other night. The last two weeks at the Grangers' were great! Harry got the great news from Tim and Rachael the next day. Of course he was excited but he didn't want to get too overboard. He knew there was extra responsibility that came with being an adult. He got his inheritance from his parents. In total Harry received close to 500,000,000 million galleons. He quickly found out that goblin taxes and ministry taxes were the first things he had to take care of.

He also discovered that his parents stored their old Hogwarts trunks in a separate vault for when Harry became of age. Harry found plenty

of his father's old pranks and pictures. Most of the pictures were of guys being goofy and waving at him. There were four names on most pictures, Prongs, Moony, Padfoot, and Wormtail. In fact he only knew the people's faces by their nicknames, and of course his father. He was the first one Harry noticed. They looked just alike in all the ways a boy can look like his father.

He checked his mother's trunk and found her letters to her family throughout the years. He also found more pictures, mostly of life outside of Hogwarts; even a few of 'baby Harry' as Hermione put it. Pay back was horrible. She found a picture of baby Harry in his crib chewing on his big toe, while James stood proud with the rest of the Maurders.

Other than being thoroughly embarrassed by the huge foot in mouth Harry over the fireplace of the Granger household, nothing really happened. Before the last week of the summer was over Mrs. Weasley invited them both over. She said her little boy really wanted to meet Harry's other friend. Harry wrote a letter saying he wasn't going to visit. But Hermione told him to get over the protectiveness and visit his friend, besides she wanted to see a real wizarding household. They arrived the night before while the Weasley children were asleep. Hermione was instructed to go to Ginny's room while Harry was sent to Ron's room. They snuck in and put away their things hoping to let the commotion start in the morning rather than the middle of the night.

Harry looked at Ron laying there with his mouth open, head back in the pillows, and his back arched. ***How can any one sleep like that!?*** After realizing the sun was shining a little brighter, Harry decided to wake Hermione so she splash water on her face and kill the beast that resides there when she wakes up. He also didn't think Ron's little sister would like having a strange girl in the bed across from her.

He slowly crept out of bed and into the room he saw Hermione go into the other night. He opened the door to find Hermione's bed made and all her belongings put away.

He walked downstairs and ran into the Weasley's kitchen. Hermione was sitting at the kitchen table while Mrs. Weasley cooked a breakfast that looked more expensive than the house.

Hermione looked up and smiled smugly, "About time you're up"

Harry smiled at her knowing that not giving her a good morning hug would be the hardest part about hiding their relationship. It was going to be hard covering everything up, but they knew they could pull it off. As long as they set aside a 'study time' for each other they were happy.

"Harry dear, are you happy to be back? I know Ron is going to be excited to see you. Oh what did you both eat? You look like sticks. Here fill up! I made everyone, one egg a piece."

Harry and Hermione looked at their mountain of eggs and gulped. "Um. I don't know if this would be considered one egg. Maybe we can just have a small scoop?" Hermione looked as if she didn't want to hurt Mrs. Weasley's feelings by saying that, but Harry agreed that it looked like enough to feed their whole family. He warned her that Mrs. Weasley could get too motherly. Hermione said she would try to understand, but she won't tolerate too much.

"It's okay dears. I forget that everyone doesn't eat like the Weasley family" Hermione smiled. ***Mrs. Weasley really is a nice, caring, and understanding woman. She should get along well with Hermione.*** "But you and Harry are awfully thin. Why don't you get 4 scoops instead?" ***Uh oh.***

"Four scoo.."

"***HERMIONE***...how was your night? How did you get up so early?" Harry gave her a look saying, just get the four scoops. She pouted and gave in.

"I'm on my fall schedule. I'm usually up by 5:30 am; sometimes I wake up late a 6 am."

Breakfast was pretty boring until Molly yelled four words that call the starving herd to the Shepard, "The food is ready!"

It sounded like hundreds of cattle were bounding down the stairs.
Here goes nothing.

Percy, Fred, George, Ron, and Ginny all stepped in, sat at their chairs and immediately dug in. Harry and Hermione gave each other another questioning glace. ***Didn't they notice us?***

Mr. Weasley came in last, kissed his wife, sat for breakfast and spoke
“Harry! And you must be Hermione. Nice to meet you”

The Weasley children all looked up except for Percy. Ron still had his mouth full of food and shouted “HARRY!” Most of his food ended up on Hermione. She mad a look between sheer disgust and loathing. Harry was trying to see this as a serious situation but he wanted to laugh. ***Nice one Ron. What a great first impression.***

Ron stared at Hermione for a minute and blushed. “Erm. I’m Ron and this is my brother Percy” Percy looked up for a second and gave a quaint nod. “These are my other brothers Fred and George...They are twins”

“Nice going genius”

“I’m pretty sure she”

“Could tell we are”

“Twins.”

“Ron is a bit shy around girls”

“He tends to say stupid things”

“Not his normal stupid things,”

“But his reserved stupidity kicks in”

“Yeah the one for girls”

“Look at him. He doesn’t even know we’re talking about his intelligence”

“He’s not the brightest in the family”

After a few seconds Ron yelled, “HEY. I’m not stupid. I knew they were talking about me. I just didn’t know in a way”

Everyone gave him the look (AN: You know the look. It’s confusion with a mix a touch of “I think you’re special”)

Realizing how dumb that was Ron looked at Ginny and said “And she is Ginny. I’m going to go to my room now and die of embarrassment”

“Don’t forget to write your will” yelled Fred

“I want his room” Ginny added

This is Break or whatever

After a weird breakfast Harry left Hermione to get to know Ginny, he had to check on Ron. On the way up Harry heard Percy yelling at the twins to give him his man purse.

“Why look George. Our bother has a purse!”

“Mum wears a purse!”

Percy took the bag and turned his nose up. “It’s a man bag. Not a purse” Then he stomped out the room.

He walked into the other room to see Ron sitting on his bed reading a Quidditch magazine.

“Hey Ron I didn’t know you read on free time”

“Ha bloody ha ha Harry. You going to make fun of me too?”

“Look Ron it was just a joke and I’m sure they didn’t mean it”

“Harry I completely embarrassed myself! I choked up! I bet if I calm down I can start over with her.”

Her!? This was all about being embarrassed in front of Hermione!? I thought it was because of both of us. “Ron we don’t

care about it we know it was a joke" Harry was sure to emphasize the 'we' in his sentences.

"What do you mean we? She must think I'm a fool. I think I like her. She really looks nice, a little thin but still nice. I want to impress her. She probably likes bad boys. Fred said the nice ones always like the bad ones" Then he put his hand on his chin and looked deep in thought.

"RON, you have to stop this. She is NOT your type. You are both too different!" **Because she is my type and she is mine.**

"Yeah. I do think she's my type. Thanks Harry. I just wasn't moving fast enough" Ron left the room leaving a confused Harry behind. **What? He must not have heard a word I just said.**

He chased after Ron to get him to listen to his advice. But it was too late; Ron was plopped down on the couch next to Hermione. She looked as if she was trying to ignore him while she had a conversation with Ginny. Ron turned around and winked at Harry. **What are you doing Ron?**

He placed his arm around Hermione's shoulder and said "You know, I think you'd look great as my girlfriend. What do you say?" Before she could reply he gave her a kiss on the cheek. Ginny looked at the girl she had only known for a few minutes and knew to cautiously go to her room. Harry didn't know whether to hit Ron or ask him who taught him pick up lines.

"Don't ever TOUCH me again! You have really got the brain of an animal. You waltz in here and think you can get a girl by being arrogant!? You are not the alpha male you think you are. You better get yourself together before you step up to me again because the next time I see you I want an apology. You small minded, ignorant little PRAT" Hermione had Ron balled up in the corner of the couch praying to Merlin that she didn't hit him. She put her hands down to her sides and composed herself. "Now Harry, I'm going to finish this last book of summer reading." And with that she stomped up the stairs.

Ron looked absolutely petrified. He turned to Harry and said, "That one is completely mental. I don't want to be with someone that has 'one last book of summer reading'. She'll never get a boyfriend that way, will she mate?"

"Erm...right. Never get a boyfriend *that way...*" ***She got me when during her summer schedule.***

She'll never get a boyfriend that way, will she mate?"

"Erm...right. Never get a boyfriend that way..." She got me when during her summer schedule.

Chapter 10: What a Start!!!

It was September 1 and the trio was getting ready to board the Hogwarts express.

"Ron! Don't forget to keep up with Ginny!" Mrs. Weasley yelled as they boarded the train.

This was the thirty-third time she said that today. Hermione had been keeping count. The last week of the summer went on pretty good. There were only two fights a day between Ron and Hermione. The only Weasley girl had a crush on The-Boy-Who-Lived. Hermione figured it out by the third day.

Flashback

"Well if it isn't Percy"

"The purse boy"

An irritated Percy turned around and said "For the last time, it is a man bag."

Harry smiled down at the three brothers, from the window he was looking out of.

He and Hermione just had a little 'study time' in Ron's room." It wasn't hard to keep Ron away when they told him they were preparing for the next term.

Ron left mumbling something that sounded like 'school is for studying, not the summer'.

Hermione looked out the window disapprovingly, "I don't know why they tease him the way they do. Percy is a very studious and hardworking person"

"Oh come on Hermione he's a pansy."

"Is that what you think about hard workers? What can make you think he is a 'pansy' or whatever you called him"

As if on cue Percy yelled "MUUUMMM! Fred and George are messing with my purse again!!!!"

"Well did you hear that George!?"

"Yeah I did Fred"

"We thought it was a man bag"

Harry laughed and even Hermione couldn't stop the smile forming on her lips.

"Okay so maybe he is a bit...whiny?"

"Wimpy, pansy, scared, annoying."

"Whatever. It still doesn't give them the right to pick on him that way. One day he will turn on them when they need him the most. It's on the news and TV shows all the time."

Harry looked at Hermione and said "You're pretty when you're in your lecture mode" They were centimeters away from a kiss when the door burst open.

"Harry do you want to play ch... What were you two doing?"

Ginny Weasley burst in on an obvious almost kiss. She wasn't as oblivious as Ron. She may have been eleven but she knew a kissy face blush when she saw one. She narrowed her eyes and waited for them to answer.

Harry looked panicked, "Er... you see, erm."

"Harry and I were just finishing our study session and we were watching Fred and George tease Percy." **Nice save Hermione.**

"Why did you need to be at the same window to do that? And why did you jump away from each other when I came in?" ***Why is she only looking at Hermione like it's a duel?***

Hermione had a look of realization and then she looked just as challenging as Ginny did "We were both at one window because we wanted to be there and we jumped because you burst in."

Ginny looked at Hermione once again and left the room.

"What was all of that?" Asked a very confused Harry.

Hermione picked up her books and said "Nothing, just a little girl talk" and she walked out the room.

I didn't hear any girl talk. Maybe Ron was right. Girls are weird.

Later that night Harry was in the room he shared with Ron. Ron was fast asleep and Harry was trying but the other boy slept like a chainsaw.

Somehow over the motor going in the room Harry heard a light tapping at the door. He answered it and in came Hermione. She looked upset and she walked over to sit on his bed. He walked over and sat beside her.

She was mad alright. "Ugh. Does he always snore like that?"

Harry raised an eyebrow, "Hermione, I don't think you came here to talk about Ron's snoring"

"You're right. I lied about Ginny's girl talk this morning. I knew she was challenging me about you and me this morning, but I wasn't sure. She confirmed my suspicions tonight. I went into our room and she was sitting in her bed. She apologized for how she treated me earlier"

Harry smiled and said "See? There is no need to be mad; she apologized" Hermione gave him a look. "Oh, I guess there's more to it?"

She nodded and continued, "She said she was sorry for being so snappy but she's had a crush on you since she was four years old! Who gets crushes that early?"

Harry looked shocked. ***Four?! Who would even teach their children about crushes while they are four.***

"Anyway, she asked me to back off. She can tell I like you but she thought you may like her better because you played chess with her before..."

Harry cut in "What? It was only one game and she beat me senseless."

"I know but she has a crush Harry. You could slap her and she'd think it was a love tap. That's just the way it is. She said that if I were to take you from her she would never forgive us. That doesn't bother me. But she is" she looked at Ron to make sure he was still asleep. When his roar of thunder erupted she whispered "She is going after my boyfriend. I feel so selfish because I knew you were going through this with Ron and I said we should stick to the plan. Now that it's me, I want to tell that we are together. Does that make me a bad person?"

Harry put his arm around her shoulder and pulled her closer "Of course it doesn't Hermione. I almost hit my friend yesterday because he was making goo goo eyes at you at lunch. We chose to keep it secret and we have to deal with it. It's natural to be jealous and mad. It doesn't make you a bad person. You are a great person"

End Flashback

"Guys here is an empty one" Ron showed the way to the compartment he found.

Ginny had gone off with one of her friends that lived in the village close by. Luna was a nice girl; weird but nice.

They put away their things and sat down for the long train ride. Hermione was nervous. She had been going on for the last hour about how no one will like her and how she will be an oddball. At

least she was until Ron got tired of it and said “Will. You. Shut. Up!?
No one cares. You’re just another student a Hogwarts!!”

Harry was hoping he would have said it nicer but it was sort of true.
After about two weeks no one will really care; she’ll be just another
student at Hogwarts.

Harry zoned out while Ron and Hermione got into another argument.
The compartment door slid open and in walked in the one git he
hoped he wouldn’t see today.

“Well it isn’t the weasel and scar head. Oh and what’s this? A new
girl.” Draco Malfoy looked at his two cronies Crabbe and Goyle and
they all smirked “You may want to stay away from these two losers.
We are a part of the better half of this school. Not some half breed
and a mudblood lover. What do you say?”

Harry looked confused. ***What is a mudblood?***

Ron was fuming and said “Watch your mouth Malfoy. She is a muggle
born and we’d appreciate if you leave.”

Draco smirked, “Oh never mind my offer, you ugly little mudblood”

Hermione looked close to tears. Ron jumped up and shoved Malfoy
into his two fat boys and they fell to the floor. He shut the door and
locked it.

Hermione looked at Ron and gave a small smile.

What the hell is going on? And why is she smiling at him!? OK
calm yourself. There is something you must be missing Harry. ***Oh
bugger off!***

“What is going on!?” he yelled. Hermione snapped her attention to
Harry and she immediately knew why she was mad.

“Oh that right mate you don’t know about that word. He called her a
...a mudbl...you know. That’s really bad here mate. Purebloods call
muggle-borns that as a way to discrimina..erm put them down. It’s a
really foul word Harry.”

"Harry understood why Ron was mad but he wasn't exactly easy on Hermione getting all light eyed at Ron, but he got over it just as quick as it started.

Later after the sorting and stuff because I can't write a good song

Harry suspicions were confirmed at dinner when everyone wondered who Hermione was for a little while. But by the end of dinner everyone knew she was a muggle born that was friends with Harry Potter and Ron Weasley.

Hermione seemed irritated by the gossiping girls she would be sharing a dorm with, but she wasn't going to turn down any friendship this early in the year. So she headed up to bed early with the rest of the girls.

Harry was currently losing in a game of chess when Ron spoke "You know Harry. Things are really looking up for me"

Harry was half paying attention to what was being said, he was losing too bad. "How so Ron?"

"I stood up for her. Did you see the way she looked at me? I was wrong all along. She want a boyfriend who would be there for her. Not some bad boy"

Harry was staring at Ron letting his words sink in.

Then Ron let out a laugh "It's a good thing you sat there Harry. She may have started to like you instead of me. Check mate. Well that's enough winning for me tonight. I'm going to bed. You coming up Harry?"

Harry was lost in thought "I'll be up later". Ron left to the boy dorms.

Oh no. I messed up. I sat there and did nothing while Malfoy teased her. She is going to hate me. I got to see her.

Harry ran to the girl's dorm only to slide down the stairs when he got halfway up. The girls ran to the stairs to find him folded between the floor and the first step.

Hermione ran down while the other girls went back inside their room laughing at the crumbled Harry on the floor.

"Harry, what did you think you were doing?" She grabbed his hand and helped him up.

"I had to speak with you...Can we sit on the sofa?" He led her to the couch in front of the fireplace and asked "Are you mad at me?"

"What!? No I'm not Harry what would make you think that?"

"Well I noticed how you looked at Ron on the train when he stood up for you. I thought maybe you were mad at me for not beating the pulp out of Malfoy"

Hermione smiled and put her hand on his shoulder, while the other went to hand. "Harry I am not mad at you. I know you didn't know what a ... mudblood was. It was something I read about in Hogwarts: A History. I know you fall asleep whenever I try to get you to read it." Then she giggled and added "If you had taken my advice and read the book, you know that the girls' dorm is prohibited from all boys."

Harry blushed, "But why were you so happy with Ron?"

"Harry that was the first thing he actually did nice for me. He is a friend even if I can't stand him, and he proved it today. I was happy he did it as a natural reaction as a friend."

Harry looked ashamed "I'm sorry I got jealous"

"You are the one that told me that a *little* jealousy is natural."

"Now Ron thinks you may like him because of the beautiful smile you gave him"

Harry could barley see the rosy ness in her cheeks. "Well we can deal with him later though. I'm more concerned about Ginny though. She's a girl on a mission"

"Hermione. No need to worry I'm with you." He gave her a peck on the lips and walked her to the steps. He was more than careful not to touch them though.

"Goodnight Hermione"

"Goodnight Harry"

When he saw her go into her room he went to his dorm and fell fast asleep.

"Hermione. No need to worry I'm with you." He gave her a peck on the lips and walked her to the steps. He was more than careful not to touch them though.

"Goodnight Hermione"

"Goodnight Harry"

When he saw her go into her room he went to his dorm and fell fast asleep.

Chapter 11: First Day Hell

Harry could not believe this was happening! It was the second day at Hogwarts and the first day of classes. He was sitting at the Gryffindor breakfast table in the Great Hall and he was utterly confused. Hermione sat across from him, with Ginny to her left and Ron to his right. Someone was running there foot on his leg. Harry tried to stay calm but let's think about things.

12 yr old boy. Girls' foot. Yup he was definitely distracted. Drooling could be a better word.

Whose foot is it!!!

Oh please! You are 12 and a hot girl is playing footsie with you! Enjoy it man!

Why does my other voice sound like Ron!? Ok there are only two choices. It's either Hermione or Ginny.

Ok then Potter, just look up and see who looks suspicious.

Harry completely panicked when he realized everyone was staring at him. He had to admit he looked pretty ridiculous. His hair was its usual catastrophe, his face was completely flushed, he had been staring at his food for the past five minutes, and he was breathing like he just finished diving for snitch at 100 mph.

He cleared his throat and everyone took that as a signal to turn away. Since everyone was getting back to their food, he decided to steal a

quick glance at the two suspects. Hermione had her head ducked, but he could tell she was smirking at him, and Ginny seem too preoccupied with her food. Actually it was kind of disturbing. She was a little girl with the manners of a 12 yr old boy...or a Ron. ***She is the only girls in the house with six brothers, what else can you expect?***

Ron reached across the table for more eggs and it shook Harry out of his thoughts. He was relieved that the mysterious foot wasn't that mysterious anymore. It had to be Hermione.

OH YEAH! YOUR GIRLFRIEND IS MAKING A MOVE ON YOU...IN PUBLIC!!!

Erm... what is she doing? Okay, her foot is getting up to my thigh. That's not so bad. It's actually kinda cool.

The foot rose a little higher like it was testing Harry's limits. Harry's eyes got wide and everyone stared at him again. Of course he didn't notice because e was lost in his thoughts.

Now I'm kinda uncomfortable. What the heck could she be trying to tell me by doing this!?

The foot rose a little to high and it completely broke through Harry's comfort zone. He jumped up and dropped his goblet filled with pumpkin juice, and successfully knocked over Dean who was sitting to his left. He got the attention of the entire hall. Even professor Dumbledore looked startled by Harry's sudden movement. He stood and stared as the entire student body stare at him.

The tower bell rang, signaling the first class of the school year. As the students filed out, he heard Draco yelling "It looks like potty is going crazy." Then he quickly stood up and knocked Crabbe down. Everyone at the Slytherin table laughed at the little re-enactment. Even his own house laughed at him.

Harry stomped out of the hall leaving Ron and Hermione running to keep up with him.

"Harry, slow down mate!"

"Harry Ron and I are here for you" When she said that Ron stopped and looked at her like she grew another head.

Harry stopped and turned to face them, but Ron looked mad at him.

"Oh please, Hermione. I'm leaving. It was all probably just a stunt to get attention and I actually fell for it for a minute there. He suddenly goes crazy in the Great Hall! Oh please." Ron looked at Hermione and held out his hand to her. "Let's go back to the tower. He'll get over it"

Hermione stopped and looked incredulously at Ron. "I'm staying with Harry. You can leave if you don't want to help your friend." At this Harry turned to see Ron's reaction to what Hermione said.

Ron looked furious. His face was cherry red and he starred daggers at Hermione, then Harry. "I'm leaving then. He just wants attention! And I am not going to be the one to give it to him. You are treating him like he wants to be treated. Someone all over him like a mother. He just wants to be spoiled. And until you figure out who is right I don't want you flirting with me anymore"

Hermione turned to reassure Harry that Ron was being stupid, but he had a look on his face that she couldn't describe. It was like he was angry, hurt, and happy all in one.

"Harry?"

Then he got a look on his face that resembled Ron's and it was aimed at HERMIONE!

"Harry what's wrong? Ron was being a, well he was being an ass."

"Ron isn't the only jackass today" Hermione knew he was talking about her but, she was confused as to what brought this anger towards her on.

"I know he isn't because you defiantly fit the description. What's going on with you?"

"What's going on?! You embarrassed me! You and your foot! Why couldn't you just keep to yourself! Now I lost my best friend in the world! And all because you wanted to play!"

Harry immediately regretted what he said. Hermione had tears welled in her eyes and she looked completely heartbroken.

"Harry I don't want to speak to you. And our relationship is over." He knew she meant business. She didn't even yell at him, she just walked away.

Harry looked down and saw a knife in his heart. It was bleeding profusely. It split through his skin and made a wound that will never be healed. He felt it rip through his organs and the warm liquid flowed down his chest and into a pool on the floor. His head was spinning. His stomach was lurching. His vision was fading.

At least that's what it felt like to him. He just lost his girlfriend. All over a stupid game of footsie. All because he had to go and run his mouth. All because Ron wanted to get jealous.

No no no no no! What have I done?

Hermione didn't deserve that

Then quit being a girl grab your...Gryffindor courage and go after her.

Harry ran. He ran but he could not find her.

He tried the common room.

The library that she found the other night after dinner.

He looked everywhere!

Where are you going Potter? She went to class! Where else would she be!

Harry gave himself a mental slap. He was 15 minutes late for his first Transfiguration class.

McGonagall is going to kill me!

Harry made a dash for class and stopped in front of the door to catch his breath and fix his windblown clothes. When he was all settled, he walked into the room.

McGonagall had her back towards the class and Harry thought he could sneak to his seat.

“Mister Potter there will be a detention for you tonight at 7:00. If you are late for that you will be having detention all month. Do you understand!?” Harry nodded and took a seat next to Hermione. Ron glared at him from his seat across the room.

She was doing exactly what he thought she would do. She ignored him.

“Hermione listen, I’m really sorry I never tried to...”

“Mister Potter! Any more disturbances to my class and you will be in detention until midnight!”

McGonagall went back to the lesson on turning a fingernail clipping into a lab mouse. When they started their notes again he decided to wait for her to be completely distracted. When she furrowed her eyebrow that means she was thinking about what she was grading.

Come on eyebrows. I have to ask Hermione something. As if they heard his thoughts, McGonagall eyebrows arched. Harry decided to act fast.

“Hermione I never tried to hurt you. I was just mad at what you did and then Malfoy went and added to it. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to yell at you”

Hermione snapped her head towards Harry and whispered snappishly “I didn’t do anything!”

“Harry cocked an eyebrow and asked “What do you mean you didn’t do anything?”

“20 points from Gryffindor!” The Ravenclaws in the class snickered. McGonagall made a sour face and her lips were almost completely

invisible. “DO NOT make me take off any more points from my house mister Potter”

Hermione got up and walked to the back of the class room. Everybody was watching expecting her to say something but she took her seat alone and went back to taking notes.

After Class

To say Harry was confused would be partially correct but he was hurt more than anything. Hermione broke up with him, she wouldn’t accept his apology, Ron was mad at him, he had detention from 7:00 to midnight, but the icing on the cake was the Potions class that he was walking to with the Slytherins.

I thought this year would be better. But it's just like the beginning of last year. I'm alone again.

Harry waked in and sat in his favorite chair from one year ago. The one in that was pushed in the corner of the Gryffindor side, isolated from everyone else. He saw Ron, Dean, and Seamus walk in the class. They all frowned at him. Ron because he was mad. Dean because he met Harry’s elbow earlier, and Seamus because he was closer to the other two than he was to Harry.

The Slytherins swayed into the class while glancing at him and laughing.

And Hermione walked in and sat next to Lavender. She gave him a quick glance and went back to getting her things ready for class.

Professor Snape walked into the class and looked at Harry.

“Today I will give a pop quiz.”

Ron jumped up outraged “But professor, it’s the first day of class! What would we know anything!?”

“With your intelligence mister Weasley I expect you to know nothing, but the rest of the class should remember material from the last

school year." Ron sat back down, looking like he would explode any minute.

"I will choose one person from each house to answer one question. If they get it correct their house will get a perfect score. If not their house will fail." Harry hated that slow talking, slick haired, flat faced, pointed hook nosed, bastard.

He knew he would be picked to represent his house.

"Potter, Malfoy. You will represent your house"

Snape walked over to Draco and smirked, "Mister Malfoy what is the definition of the word potion"

Draco smirked, "It's the mixture of liquids, sir?" **Does he really have to ask? I learned that in muggle school.**

"Correct! The Slytherins will receive a passing grade for their first quiz"

All the Slytherins cheered and Draco leaned back in his chair proud of his preschool answer.

"Potter! What is the most crucial ingredient in the hair growth potion?"

WHAT? We never went over any hair growth potion! How would I know?

Snape walked in from of Harry and stood towering over him with a raised eyebrow. "I am waiting for your answer Potter"

"Erm..I don't remember going over that in class sir."

"So you don't know the answer." Harry nodded and Snape smirked.

"20 points from Gryffindore because Potter did not study his second year potions book over the summer. It is in the fourth chapter. Gryffindor fails their first pop quiz, thanks to mister Potter"

"But sir! We are not required to read the next year's book until we have an assignment"

"You are new. Misses Granger, correct?"

"Yes professor"

"Granger is a muggle name so you are a muggle born witch. You have no authority in my eyes. And it is my class room my rules and what I say goes. 5 points from Gryffindor from Granger trying to be a goody two shoes"

The Gryffindor students groaned and glared at professor Snape. Harry caught Hermione giving him a look. It was almost like she felt bad for him.

It didn't last long though, she turned away and he tried to ignore the glares from Ron and his two goons.

He is treating be like Malfoy does. I could have gotten better by staying with the Dursleys for the year. At least they wouldn't turn on me. They never liked me to begin with. I can't take this any more!

Harry stood up and started packing his things. "Potter sit down class isn't over yet there is still another hour left!!"

Harry just ignored him and picked his things up and headed for the door. "If you leave I will take another 10 points from your house!!"

Harry was furious. Before he knew what came over him he started yelling "I DON'T CARE ABOUT THEM! THEY HAVE DONE NOTHING BUT IGNORE ME SINCE BREAKFAST BECAUSE OF MY SUDDEN ACTIONS! THEY DIDN'T EVEN THINK TO ASK WHAT WAS WRONG! WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT PEOPLE WHO COULD GIVE A DAMN ABOUT ME?" Everyone took a collective gasp and stared at him. He actually yelled at the worst professor at Hogwarts.

He swung his bag on his back and stomped to Gryffindor tower. He went to the boys dorm and pulled the big red curtains around his bed and cast a silencing charm around his area and a gluing charm so no one would get past is bed curtains and he won't hear what they have to say.

Harry sat and thought for a long time.

He thought about everything from the Dursleys to Hogwarts, and that is a wide range.

And he drifted off to sleep.

Break to later when he wakes up

After missing Potions, Muggle Studies and Defense with that future airhead Lockhart, Harry decided he wasn't in the mood to eat dinner with the rest of the students.

He decided to stay and clean his portion of the room. "Man I really didn't care about neatness last night while unpacking"

"OH Harry Potter sir. Dobby missed you!" Harry looked at the house elf that appeared on his leg. His first reaction was to try to kick it off but he remembered his last conversation with Dobby, and he actually liked the little fella, **or is it a girl?**

"Erm Dobby, are you a boy or girl house elf? I know it sounds rude but I don't think you ever stated it before"

"Dobby is a male elf sir. In fact I like a lady elf. She looks like Harry Potter's Money"

"My money? I use pounds as currency."

Dobby smiled and said, 'Harry Potter is a good man for jokes sir' Harry looked at the little elf and gave a little smile, but he really wanted to know what dobby was taking about.

"Oh Harry Potter is serious. I was talking about your missus. Hermoney Grangie"

Harry laughed so hard he was rolling on the floor. "Oh Harry Potter sir what is wrong?"

Harry laughed while trying to regain his strength. "I just was thinking about something Dobby. But what are you doing here"

Dobby snapped his fingers and Harry's portion of the room was spotless. He looked at Dobby amazed. 'Thanks a lot!!'

"Dobby just has one last thing to say Mr. Potter. Be careful of the little black book. Dobby hears that the book has a dangerous person in it." Dobby smiled and disappeared, leaving Harry confused.

Well I'm going to sit in the common room and get warm. It's freezing up here.

Harry walked down to the common area and sat in the sofa in front of the fire. The room was empty and it was just how he wanted it. Nobody whispering about him. Nobody thinking badly about him. No Boy-Who-Lived. Just Harry.

There should be about 30 minutes before I have to go back up. Diner would be over then.

He heard the door slide open. ***So much for peace and quite.***

He looked back and saw Hermione. She had been crying and was just as shocked to see him as he was to see her.

She quickly wiped her eyes and tried to dash upstairs to the girls' dorm.

"Hermione!" She stopped and turned to face him. She felt horrible. She could barely stand feeling this feeble and ashamed around Harry. She walked over and sat next to him on the couch.

Harry couldn't stand the distance. If they were alone like this she would cuddle up to him and they would talk, snog, or anything besides look dumbly at one another. Their silences have never been this awkward. Harry missed his best friend and it had only been 7 hours.

"Hermione..." Harry didn't know where to start. All he knew was he yelled and lost his temper, but there had to be more. He didn't know what to say sorry for. "I'm sorry for yelling at you...and...whatever else I did to make you this mad at me."

Hermione looked like she was getting mad again. “What do you mean, you don’t know what else you did? Harry you told me we were best friends!”

Harry was confused “Of course we are. I never lied about that! I don’t know why you are this mad at me. Don’t make me guess Hermione, just tell me.”

“Harry you were mad at me for getting Ron mad at you. Then you called him your best friend. We promised we would be best friends forever. He walked out on you and you blamed me! I did nothing to deserve the hate you gave me today Harry. I never thought you would even look at me like that.”

“Come on Hermione. I’m a preteen boy. Of course that little game you played with me today had me frustrated! I didn’t have hate for you. I just wasn’t thinking straight. I know you are my best friend. Ron turns on me all the time! I was just mad at what you did. I really did over react. It was just a little embarrassing. My mind wasn’t exactly in my mind Hermione.” Harry blushed harder than he did on their first kiss. But Hermione was looking at him like he was crazy.

“What are you on about! I did nothing to you”

What did she have a dinner? Did it make her forget? I’m gonna kill Fred and George.

“What!? Hermione, you played footsie with me at breakfast! I was enjoying it at first but you went a little too high and I was getting a little excited. I wasn’t comfortable being... excited in the Great Hall.” Harry leaned in and whispered every time he said excited. “I knew it was you because you kept smirking at me. And you tried to hide it by looking down.”

“Harry I was laughing not smirking. You were sitting across from me staring at your food making funny faces. I didn’t want to laugh at you”

Harry knew where this was going but he wanted to hear it from her mouth. “So what exactly are you saying?” Suddenly Hermione looked furious. Harry was kind of scared.

"I'm saying that Ginny was playing footsie with you and had on a great, cover-up face."

Oh my... Merlin! It was Ginny! She must have done it because she knew I wouldn't stop her if I thought it was Hermione. How can she eat that horribly while keeping a straight face! She knew what she was doing and she kept it cool. Ugh I didn't even take a look back at her after I stood up. I bet she was laughing. That bi...

"HARRY! Are you listening to me!? We have to get her back. We have to think of something good. She started all of this. I can blame you for being a little snappy if you were...excited" Harry laughed when she whispered the word trying to mock him.

Harry's smile dropped and he looked Hermione in the eyes, "Hermione does this mean we are back together?"

She blushed and looked away. She was chewing on her bottom lip thinking about what her answer would be. She turned back around and smiled. "Of course we are back together. I want to apologize to you. I should not have ignored you today. I should have heard what you had to say and it would have saved us a lot of time with getting back together."

OH THANK MERLIN SHE SAID YES!!!

Harry leaned in and kissed her softly on the lips. She shyly responded back. He slipped his tongue out at her mouth. Hermione opened her eyes and pulled away.

"I...I'm really, really sorry! I just thought...I wasn't thinking"

"Harry I was just shocked that's all. Lets try again."

Harry kissed her again, but he was hoping she wouldn't pull back again. He slipped his tongue out again and she immediately allowed him entrance. ***Oh crap what to do now?***

He moved his tongue around and hoped it was going okay for her. She started to kiss him back while moving her tongue. ***Hey this isn't bad. It's great.***

He slipped his hands under the hem of her shirt. She reached for his sweater and put her hands on his stomach. ***I am going to die out of pure happiness.***

The door burst open. They jumped apart and stared at the person that walked in.

Harry knew he saw. It was impossible for him not to see from the view he had. ***It won't be long before he says...***

"WHAT THE HELL?"

Ron is doing to kill me

Harry knew he saw. It was impossible for him not to see from the view he had. ***It won't be long before he says...***

"WHAT THE HELL?"

Ron is going to kill me

Next Chapter

Chapter 12: Fights and Snakes

It was all a big blur. Harry couldn't think straight. He had the metallic taste of blood in his mouth. His head was ringing, the room was spinning. Hermione was concerned. He could tell because she was trying to sit him up with a look of panic on her face. She looked up at Ron and started yelling but Harry couldn't hear her. That's when it all came rushing back to him.

Ron walked in on his and Hermione's first real snog. He knew Ron would be mad. He knew Ron would want to hit him. He knew Ron would feel betrayed. He knew Ron would be vicious. What Harry didn't know was the speed and good left hook Ron possessed.

Before Harry could open his mouth to try to explain, Ron darted at him and knocked him down with one blow. Of course Harry would never say he was *knocked out* by Ron, because technically he never lost consciousness... he was just a little dazed.

Ok he was completely shook up. That wasn't the problem though. Over the years he learned to take these types of hits. The problem was the look of pure hatred on his friend's face. He only got that look from his uncle, and that was only when he was in for trouble.

When Harry got all of his senses back he looked at Hermione and gave her a small nod indicating that he was alright. She refused to let him go without a fight but Harry had too much strength for her. He may have looked small but he could take on another boy his age. He jumped up before she could get a good grip on him.

He still felt the blood running out his mouth but he wasn't going to take this sitting down... or on the floor. If Ron wanted a fight he was going to get one.

"You have EVERYTHING! And you took the girl you knew I wanted. You're nothing but a stupid half-blood and YOU. You're a filthy mudblood like Malfoy said."

Harry was waiting for another physical punch, but the emotional blow he got was enough to knock him down again. He never thought he would hear Ron say those things. But shock and hurt weren't the only things that Harry was feeling. He was feeling rage. Far more rage than he ever felt before.

"Harry! You need to stay calm. If you retaliate you'll be just as bad as him! He'll get in trouble either way, don't get yourself in trouble too!" Hermione could sense his rage towards Ron.

They were standing face to face both red with anger. Ron slightly taller than Harry but he sure wasn't intimidated by him.

The rest of the Gryffindor students started piling in after dinner. And they could all tell what happened. Ron hadn't been exactly subtle about his flirting with Hermione. But on the other hand they all knew about Harry and Hermione's friendship before Hogwarts. They all saw it coming and no one was going to stop it; it looked like a soon to be good fight.

Purse-he, as the twins liked to call him, was trying to make his way through the crowd.

"WHAT IS GOING ON? I am prefect and I deserve some answers! Get out of my way! Let me see what is going on." He took in the scene before him and took a deep breath for the patented Percy call for McGonagall, when suddenly a silencing charm was placed on him, leaving him red with yelling. The twins snickered and congratulated each other, while Percy ran off to find McGonagall.

Harry and Ron noticed none of this. "What did you call us!?" his voice was shaking with anger.

"I called you a half-blood and she's a filthy mudblood. You both stabbed me in the back. She was the first girl I liked and you STOLE her. She's just a mudblood like your mother"

There were gasp and whispers of "did he just say those things?" "Was that Ron Weasley?" "I know he didn't just talk about his momma."

Before Hermione could reach for Harry, he charged at Ron knocking both of them to the floor. Harry was struggling to get a hit in but Ron's arms were too long. He pushed him off and made a swing at Harry but he was too fast. Harry moved his head and Ron smashed his fist against the hard floor. You could hear the crack of his knuckles breaking from the impact. Harry was going to stop, thinking that that was enough punishment for anybody, but Ron wasn't finished.

For him to be a 12 year old Ron had a lot of endurance. He broke his hand for Merlin's sake!

He attacked Harry and knocked him down again and gave his a punch in the stomach with his other good hand. Harry wasn't affected by it; his adrenaline was pumping too fast. His temper was getting out of control. His magic was raging from his core. All Harry could see was red. And like a ticking bomb it all exploded. His magic surged through him like the pure electricity of lightening.

Every one took a gasp as Ron flew on the other side of the room with enough force to make the thick Hogwarts walls crumble.

Everyone in the room was afraid that the force could have killed Ron. They sighed in relief when he staggered to get up and glared daggers at Harry. He had hatred in his eyes but they knew the fight was over. Ron Weasley was about to be the next patient in the school's hospital.

Harry ran over with unnatural speed and gave Ron one last punch. The one punch he knew he needed. The one punch that knocked Ron out cold. The one punch that made every one that was watching in the common room fear the twelve year old Boy-Who-Lived.

Harry Potter was giving off a force so strong that they all began to back away and try to find the nearest thing to hide behind.

Hermione was staring at the boy before her in shock. He had a strange glow about him. It was like the rage completely took over his mind. She knew he would have to learn to control it. She knew he could possibly be one of the most powerful wizards to walk the earth. But if he didn't know how to control it he could be the most dangerous person to be around.

She stepped forward as Harry breathed deeply and looked down on the unconscious Ron. She slowly reached out and gently touched his arm. He jerked around and looked her in the eyes. She couldn't be scared if she wanted to. Those were the same eyes of the Harry she has known and became best friends with. She knew he wouldn't hurt her.

"WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!" Poor McGonagall looked like she was going to pass out.

Albus Dumbledore walked in after her and even he had to gasp at the sight before him.

Poppy and Snape were the last to enter and they were both too shocked to move.

There was a crumpled Ronald Weasley, a calming Harry Potter, a worried Hermione Granger, and an entire room full of scared Gryffindor students. It was unbelievable! They were scared brave people (talk about an oxymoron). Poppy ran over to Ron and checked him over. The twins and Percy ran forward to see about their little brother. And Ginny was crying wondering about how Ron was going to be.

Poppy looked up and told everyone "He will be fine. He was knocked out, and he's sore. He suffers from a fractured hand, but he should be just fine in a few days. Until then, he will be in the hospital wing. Weasleys if you would please follow me. I'll be sure to contact your parents."

The four Weasley children followed Madam Pomfrey out to the hospital while she levitated Ron and had Snape follow after her to make healing potions.

"I demand an explanation!" Dumbledore never used that tone of voice. Students tried to go to their dorms but he stopped them. "You will not leave until I find out what happened" He looked around at all of the students, trying to find one that looked honest enough. "What happened Mr. Longbottom?"

Neville was actually shaking. "Erm. Uuuh. Professor. I don't know exactly what happened. When we came in from dinner they were all ready to fight. Then Harry asked Ron what he just said and Ron called Harry a s...stupid half blood and he called Hermione a....a mudblood, sir."

Neville bowed his head in shame as if he was the one that called them those names. "Harry got really mad and Ron flew to the wall. When he got up Harry hit him and he passed out. That's all I saw sir" It was deathly quiet in the tower.

"Is what Mr. Longbottom said true?" Most of the people nodded a yes.

"Mister Potter what cause this confrontation in the first place?" Harry wouldn't answer he just kept his eyes to the floor.

Hermione spoke up for him before Dumbledore could get mad. "Professor, Harry and I are boyfriend and girlfriend. We didn't tell anyone because things are too dangerous for Harry. Ron started to like me after I had already been dating Harry for a month. He's been flirting none stop, but we kept our secret. Harry and I were...um... well, we were, kissing" all the students took a gasp, and Hermione glared at them. "Oh grow up. I saw Seamus kissing....um... well anyway, Ron walked in and knocked Harry down. He called us the names Neville said and they began to fight."

McGonagall was furious "I WILL NOT TOLORATE FIGHTING IN MY HOUSE!!! NOR WILL I TOLORATE YOUTH KISSING!!!" She was just about to take 3 million points away from Gryffindor when Dumbledore stopped her.

"Now Minerva, can you honestly say that at that age you weren't curious about a kiss?" She stared wide eyed gaping like a fish. "Mr. Potter, Ms. Granger come with me. The rest of you are required to

stay in here for the rest of the night." Before the door closed they heard the excited chatter of the students talking about the latest fight.

Dumbledore's Office

Harry and Hermione were sitting in the two chairs across the Headmaster's desk.

McGonagall was still very upset. Her lips were completely invisible now.

And Dumbledore was looking very pensive. He took a deep breath and looked at Harry. "You could have been expelled Harry. In fact I am tempted to do so." Hermione gasped and gave Harry an 'I told you so' look. He shrank down in his chair looking mortified and embarrassed all in one.

"BUT I cannot do that. Since Mr. Weasley was the first to throw a punch, you were defending yourself. Mr. Weasley will not be expelled either the damage done to him is enough punishment. BUT YOU BOTH will serve a month of detention."

Hermione smiled, obviously thinking that punishment was fit. Harry scowled at the fact of having a detention when he was defending himself. "Professor! I was protecting myself! He attacked me. What was I supposed to do walk away and tell!? I'm not afraid of him!"

Dumbledore stood up with enough force that made the two women jump "You will not defy my judgment! You should have told someone he was attacking you!"

Little Harry Potter stood up with just as much force and yelled "Well next time Voldemort wants to take over, I'll let him kill me and come back as a ghost and tell you about it!" Dumbledore's face paled and he took in a deep gasp.

"You see! What was I supposed to do!? He knocked me OUT umm.... He knocked me down. Yes knocked me DOWN! I was just gonna runaway? NO! I was defending myself and Hermione. I will not be walked over again. Especially by someone I know I can take on!"

"YOU COULD HAVE KILLED HIM. Your powers are not in control. Your magic threw another student against the wall and then you knocked him down, and then at his weakest moment you punched him! That was a dirty way of fighting Mister Potter." McGonagall was getting even madder than she was before. How dare a student talk back to Dumbledore after he was just in a fight like that!

"Trying to kill a baby was just as bad, wasn't it? Beating up a little boy that can't possibly have any defense is just as bad. Calling your best friends a half-blood and mudblood are JUST AS BAD!"

Everyone was quiet thinking over what Harry had said.

"ssssssstarting to defy the headmassster. N/CCCCCE!"

Harry turned around and looked. He saw nothing but he got up and tried to follow the trail of the snake-like voice.

He ran to the door when, "HARRY" everyone looked at Hermione and Harry was startled.

"You don't hear it! Let's follow it!"

Tears began to fall from her eyes "Harry no one is talking"

Harry looked down trying to take everything in. He knew he heard someone say 'starting to defy the headmaster. Nice'. Harry looked up to see the others staring at him.

He started to shake. He knew those looks weren't good "What's happening to me?"

"Harry you are starting to release new powers. Wandless magic being one. You will start you training sooner than we expected. If you don't learn control, you anger could seriously harm more students than just Mister Weasley" Dumbledore sounded a bit frantic. Harry nodded "You said you heard a voice. Harry what did it say?"

"It said 'starting to defy the headmaster. Nice" McGonagall and Albus looked at one another with concern in their eyes. "what does it mean?"

"I don't know but we will find out soon; I have my suspicions though. Until then you and miss Granger will head to the tower" Harry and Hermione began to walk away. "Oh and Harry you and Mister Weasley *will* serve your detentions with your head of house" Harry nodded and walked away.

The walk to the tower was silent. Halfway through Harry stopped Hermione, "Are you mad at me?"

Hermione smiled "No Harry. I understand why you fought. I just thought it would be nice to let you know what would happen. You got your punishment anyway." Harry laughed a little. But Hermione's face didn't falter, "Harry, this is serious. Hearing voices, even in the wizarding world, is bad. The good thing is Dumbledore knows, and he's searching for an answer."

Harry nodded slowly then his head perked up and snapped to the left. And he ran off at full speed. Hermione ran after him. In fact she was happy that she could keep up. ***I knew I was athletic!***

They stopped at the sight before them. Mrs. Norris was hanging in the air and appeared to be dead. A group of Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws were on their way to their towers and saw Harry Potter standing by the cat, with what looked to be blood on the walls saying 'The Chamber has now been re-opened. Enemies of the heir beware' They started talking about how Harry could do such a thing. And he ran off with Hermione hot on his heals.

Next Day

Harry woke up earlier than usual and expected to see the others in bed, but they weren't. He didn't think too much of it until he went down stairs and not even one person was in the common room. He was starting to panic. ***What's going on? Where is everyone?*** He ran full speed to the Great Hall and saw all the students sitting there staring at him. Hermione stood up from her chair in a corner with a small table and he walked over to her.

"What's going on? Why are you over here? And why is everyone looking at us?"

"Harry, they all put some things together. The Gryffindors were talking about what happened with Ron last night and the Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs were talking about the message on the wall. They put two and two together and came up with the conclusion that you killed Mrs. Norris and opened the Chamber of Secrets. They think you are the heir to Slytherin Harry."

The gossip was getting louder, everyone was staring at Harry. Filch limped over to Harry and said, "YOU DID IT. YOU KILLED MY CAT...she was my everything"

His everything? What kinda lonely life does this man have?

"**SILENCE!**" everyone looked at Dumbledore. "Harry Potter was with me last night. He was getting a detention for the fight he had with a friend of his. And Mrs. Norris isn't dead. She has been petrified. Everyone will travel in the halls with groups of two to be safe from whatever is doing this. Now I will not tolerate this kind of disrespect to ones own classmate. Resume your breakfast"

Yeah right, like that will stop them. This is going to be a horrible year.

Harry looked over at Hermione and grabbed her hand. "Hermione I'm sorry. I'm always the reason you don't have friends, first with Dudley and now at Hogwarts"

"I'm fine Harry. I have you. We are the **BEST** of friends and even more. No need for a bunch of friends that will turn against you. I'm more than fine with this Harry. You have nothing to worry about." They shared a smile and went back to their food. ***I have someone by my side.***

9 Days Later

Ronald Weasley was just released from the hospital. He was getting updates on everything that was happening from Fred, George and Ginny. She was the most unsettling though. She would disappear and come back tired and unfocused.

She told him how she knew Harry and Hermione were together. She saw them kissing this past summer. She said she wanted them to tell the truth. He didn't believe that was all though. After him forcing more out of her, she admitted that she liked Harry and wanted them to break up.

She told how she set Hermione up at the breakfast table too. He was upset. More at the fact that Ginny was playing footsie with Harry. She cried and begged for forgiveness and said if it weren't for her, none of the horrible thing would have happened.

They talked for hours and eventually they got closer than they ever were before. Over the days Ginny confided in her brother. She told him that bad things were happening. Bad things were going to get worse.

He was scared at the look on her face as she said it. And yet he wanted to cry because she was hurting and he couldn't fix it. He didn't know what to think. So he just hugged his sister every time she came in with tears in her eyes for no known reason, or none that she would tell him about.

Fred and George would tell him about everything that was going on with Harry.

At first Ron didn't want to hear it. But when they told about the cryptic message and the Chamber of Secrets, he got into the stories. He didn't believe Harry would do those things. Fred and George obviously didn't believe it either and that was a good thing.

Over the next few days Ron thought over everything. He knew Harry was powerful; he had the bruises to prove it. But he still couldn't help but think there was more to this story. It's like something was missing.

Then there was Hermione. He should have seen the signs. Always together. Best friends. Studying in the summer. It all made since! They had been together all along. The twins told him that the couple admitted that they wanted to keep her safe from followers of You-Know-Who. He should have known.

He ignored all the times Harry would glare at him for staring at her or flirting with her. He felt bad that he took the one thing Harry ever wanted. ***And to think, that's what I said to him.***

He even knew they weren't going to be good together. She was more Harry's type. ***She studies in the summer for crying out loud! THE SUMMER!***

Ron felt bad. Sure he was mad at Hermione and Harry. Sure he was mad that they kept it secret. But he was mad at himself. He acted no better than Malfoy that day. He had to make up with his friend...after detention of course

One, two, three BREAK

Harry walked to McGonagall's office she said he had to scrub the floors with a brush. And by the end of the week she expected him and Ron to have the whole first floor done.

Talk about punishment. This is torture. Clean the floors with someone who wants to kill me. I would have rather degrease Snape's hair.

He walked into the office to see Ron waiting with his brush in hand. Harry walked over to the other bucket and brush and tried not to look at Ron.

He walked out to the hall and got on the floor and began to scrub. He thought that maybe Ron would start going the other way and they would never have to see each other, but Ron started scrubbing next to Harry.

After a half hour of scrubbing in silence Ron spoke up.

"Harry, I'm sorry"

What did he just say?

"What did you just say?" (Sorry I love that in movies lol)

"I said I'm sorry Harry. I should have been a friend and not attack you like that. I should have never called you those names. I feel disgusting. I was as low as Malfoy."

"Usually it won't be that easy to be forgiven. But I need all the friends I can get so you're forgiven Ron. I will tell you this only once. I need true friends and not phony people who will turn on me every chance they get, but I should have told you from the start. Hermione and I we like each other a lot and would love if you would still be a friend. Am I forgiven too?"

"Sure and I'd love that but, I need time to get used to the idea. I can't have any more shocks like the last time."

"Well we should get back to the floors. McGonagall will kill us if she saw us speaking"

"Yeah. I heard that she was going to take off millions of points from our house. Hermione would have been working double time to get them back" They laughed and got back to work.

Same night in the common room

Harry and Ron slumped back into the common room. Fingers tired, aching, and filled with scrapes. Hermione was waiting up and rushed to them when they stepped in.

"Are you okay? You both look horrible!"

Ron rolled his eyes "Thanks a lot Hermione and here I thought I was looking good with my Filch posture"

"Oh Ron, you know what posture is! I'm so happy for you"

"Ha bloody ha ha"

Harry laughed at the two. He knew they would be good friends once all the tension was settled.

"I know a few healing spells. I learned from McGonagall during tutoring. I kept burning myself with sparks from my wand when I first got it. So I think they would work for these little scrapes."

"They aren't *that little* they are man scrapes from man work. Right Ron?"

"Yeah. She had us scrubbing the floors with our bare hands. She's mental I tell you!"

Hermione rolled her eyes, "So let me get this straight, she had you scrubbing floors with brushes? And you assumed you had to use your hands although she may have never said don't use magic? Did your aprons get too dirty?"

Ron scowled. He looked at his hands and his scrapes were gone.
"You worked fast...I'm sorry to you too Hermione."

"I knew you two made up! And we are okay too Ron."

Hermione was so happy that she hugged them both.

"EW! NO! I don't want your... girl feelings to rub off on me, I'm gonna go to bed. See you guys tomorrow"

"I'm glad he's a friend Harry, things should be easier now."

Harry laughed, "You must have forgot, all of the school thinks that I'm a cat killer. I'm getting tired. I'm gonna head off. See you in the morning?"

"Yeah goodnight Harry" They hugged and went their separate ways.

Harry got in his bed and drifted off to sleep.

Close than anyone could imagine

The snake slithered behind a young boy with a camera.

"I know you're out here! Where are you!? I know you had detention tonight" The boy thought he had him so he turned around to quickly

snap a picture of his hero Harry Potter and immediately froze with his camera to his face.

The snake slithered by as young Colin hit the floor with a thump. He was petrified.

The snake slithered behind a young boy with a camera.

"I know you're out here! Where are you!? I know you had detention tonight" The boy thought he had him so he turned around to quickly snap a picture of his hero Harry Potter and immediately froze with his camera to his face.

The snake slithered by as young Colin hit the floor with a thump. He was petrified.

Chapter 13: Hermione's Got It!

The news spread fast. By breakfast the next morning everyone knew that Colin had been petrified.

Everyone knew that young Colin admired Harry Potter.

Everyone knew he was petrified in the hall that Harry and Ron had to clean.

Everyone was sitting and chatting about the guy who did it, and why a person that dangerous is still in school.

Everyone except three Gryffindors. Ronald Weasley, who was currently too full to breath, yet alone gossip. Hermione Granger, who couldn't stop staring sadly at her messy haired boyfriend.

Then there was Harry Potter. Harry Potter was sitting hunched over his plate staring at his eggs, not moving except the slow rhythm of his breathing. He looked like he just found out he only had 1 hour to live. This was by far his worse day, and it hadn't even really started yet.

After 20 minutes of constant gossip about Harry, Dumbledore stood made all the food disappear. There were yells of "I wasn't finished with that" and chatters about why breakfast is ending early. When everyone quieted down, Dumbledore spoke.

"It saddens me to have to do this again. I am an old wizard but I can very well hear the comments being made about Mr. Potter" Chatter

immediately broke out again. People were furious that their food was taken because of *Harry Potter*.

“SILENCE!”

The entire Great Hall fell silent at the no so subtle command.

“Now as I was saying. It is impossible that Mr. Potter was the one to petrify Mr. Creevy last night. Yes he was found in the hall that Mr. Potter’s detention was held in, but that doesn’t put the blame on him. The truth is, Hogwarts isn’t safe anymore. I told you all to travel in groups for a reason. There is something or someone trying to cause harm inside this school.”

“YEAH WE KNOW. IT’S POTTER” the rest of the school nodded their heads affirmative.

“ONE more disruption and you will be detained Mr. Malfoy. It is not Harry Potter and I have a teacher as proof.”

Harry looked up at this. ***Proof? Teacher? Wait, I missed something.***

“Professor McGonagall was the one that gave detention that night.”

Dean Thomas yelled out “But Ron was blabbing about how she wasn’t there. How could she be proof ?”

Harry glared at Ron. “Harry, I’m sorry mate. I didn’t think that these rumors would be around. I said that before everyone found out...sorry” Harry nodded and listened to the rest of what Dumbledore had to say.

“Mr. Thomas the same goes for you as it does Mr. Malfoy.”

“BUT YOU ARE LYING FOR POTTER!” Everyone snapped their heads over to Dean who was fuming. “I WILL NOT SHARE A ROOM WITH SOMEONE LIKE HIM. RON WAS RIGHT TO CALL HIM THOSE THINGS. HE’S TRYING TO KILL PEOPLE IN HOGWARTS!”

Seamus stood with dean, “YEAH YOU’RE PUTTING US IN DANGER BEING IN A DORM WITH *HIM*”

Hermione looked over to Harry and knew what was going to happen if he didn't calm down. His fists were clenched tight out of anger. His face was flushed. His body was tense. Oh yes, Harry was about to snap.

Seamus turned to face Harry, "YOU'RE A DISGRACE TO US ALL. WE NEVER DID ANYTHING TO YOU, YET YOU WANT TO HARM US. YOU BELONG IN SLYTHERIN"

Harry stood up and hit his palms on the table. Everyone gasped at what happened next. \

The Gryffindore table vanished.

Harry looked down at where the table used to be, then he looked in the air...just to make sure it wasn't floating above them. Albus chose that moment to speak again.

"Mr. Potter was under watch last night. Professor McGonagall was hidden in the hall watching over her detention time. She wanted to see if the boys would start another fight or were they really sorry. If another fight was started, they would be under attention for being expelled if they could not solve their differences. She watched them do their work and go directly to their dorms. The Fat Lady reported that Mr. Creevy was the only one to leave after that. The problem is Mr. Potter is a powerful young man. His accidental magic is going against him right now."

Dumbledore looked over to Ron "Last year you, Mr. Weasley, made my plate of food fly to you when you were hungry and couldn't wait for the students dinner to appear" Ron looked away and blushed. He couldn't help that he was starving and the teachers get their food first!

He looked at Susan Bones next "You accidentally conjured a puppy that was exactly like yours when you got homesick" Susan smiled at the thought of her puppy at home. She missed him dearly at times. She was sitting in History of Magic and her dog appeared out of nowhere!

He looked at Fred next; "You filled the Great Hall with roses when you found out you passed DADA" Fred was embarrassed. At least

the could have left the manly thorns on. But no, they were nice and picked ROSES...he got girly talk for weeks from the guys, especially George, and even Percy.

"Hunger, sadness, and happiness started their magic to flow. All emotions effect magic and the strength of it. Mr. Potter here is angry. You all turned on him once again without even considering the other options! Last week Mr. Longbottom blew up a cauldron when he got house points taken away from Gryffindor, in potions class. Accidental magic is easily forgiven by the ministry. If what Mr. Potter just did wasn't accidental he would be getting taken away by the ministry as we speak." He looked pointedly at Harry, "But you all are here to learn to control and develop it!"

Dumbledore waved his hand and the Gryffindor table was put back into place. "Mr. Finnegan, Mr. Thomas, you will receive detention for disobeying my orders of being quiet when I gave you both a fair warning before you chose to shout again. Meet me after breakfast. All classes are canceled today!" and with a wave of his hand, the food reappeared on the table; their food was the same as before, all the way down to the bite marks.

The students were too sullen to cheer about no classes or to even touch their food. All except the Slytherins...only a few of them took Dumbledore's words to heart.

Harry turned and walked briskly out of the Great Hall with Hermione and Ron hot on his trail.

They walked quietly to the common room. Harry plopped down in one of the big cushion chairs. Hermione and Ron took the couch next to him. Hermione sat quietly waiting for Harry to begin, she wanted to ask him what was wrong, but knew to let him sort things out first.

Ron was having a mix of emotions. He was furious at Dean, Seamus, and the rest of the Gryffindors. How could they turn against Harry so quickly! They didn't even think of the possibilities of him not doing it. They just assumed he did. He felt sad at the fact that a while ago he would have easily been with them on their assumptions. He was just as quick to turn on Harry too. Then he felt horrible for Harry. He was

with him the entire time. They never even thought that he, Ron, could have been the one to have done it. He just felt horrible.

Then there was also Ginny. She had been getting worse and worse. She would come to him crying, telling him that she couldn't help it, the snake was doing its' job. This scared Ron. His sister would only repeat that over and over again. And he wanted to help but there was no use, he was close to thinking she was crazy, but he couldn't bring himself to finish the thought. He loved his sister, no matter how much they fought, and he wanted to keep her secret but some things needed to be told for the safety of others. Ron had made up his mind a few days ago to tell someone. He just hadn't built up the courage to do it.

Ron was snapped out of his thoughts by Harry's voice, "Um thanks guys. I know it's hard to stick with me, especially with you Ron. You didn't turn on me and I guess I'm saying thanks. Honestly, I could care less what the others think. But a few things have been bothering me."

Harry took a deep breath and continued, "The voice, I hear it a lot now. In the halls it comments on things people say and it goes back to where it came from. I heard it say something about a girl and master. When it's far away it's harder to understand what it is saying."

Harry looked up at Ron and Hermione. They were looking at him intently but not like he was some freak.

Harry couldn't hold it in any longer, he was scared. He heard voices that said weird things and his powers were out of control. He didn't know what was happening to him.

His voice cracked as he spoke, "The voice scares me, that snake like voice"

Ron jumped up and looked at Harry. They stared at him wondering what happened.

"What did you say Harry? Did you say snake voice?"

"Ye...Yeah. It kinda rolls the S words. It reminds me of a snake hiss."

Ron knew it was time to talk. "Listen, Ginny has been acting weird. She is terrified and jumpy about something. She says she can't help it and bad things are happening. Then the last time she told me the snake was doing its' job. Now you hear snakes! That's no coincidence Harry. Something is really happening. You are not losing it mate. But whatever is happening, it's happening with Ginny too."

Hermione had a look of deep concentration on her face. Harry knew she was close to figuring something out; she did it all the time while doing homework.

Her eyes widened and she gasped. "I have a suspicion but we need to get to the library"

Harry and Ron followed her as she practically ran to her favorite place in Hogwarts. When they reached the library, the boys took a well deserved rest at a table in the corner furthest away from Madam Prince. Hermione looked in a section on history and came back to the table with, what Ron thought was, the thickest tomb in the library.

She opened the book and started her search. She read with incredible speed; her eyes darting back and forth with every line.

Harry was fascinated by her skills. It was as if she was using magic to absorb the book! He couldn't help but smile at the thought of how cute she looked when she was in 'search mode', as he liked to call it.

He must have had a goofy grin on his face, because Ron nudged his shoulder and whispered, "No time for that mate"

Harry blushed and looked away. Hermione shouted "I GOT IT!"

Madam Prince looked sharply at Hermione and gave one of the greatest library SHHHH's ever.

Hermione sat down and whispered frantically, "I know what is going on; this just confirmed my suspicions! But you both have to have open minds to what I am going to tell you"

They nodded and she continued. "Okay. Harry hears voices a voice that sounds like a snake. Ginny says the snake is doing its job. When

I read about the Chamber of Secrets in Hogwarts: A History, it said that Slytherins' heir opened the chamber once before, almost 50 years ago. Students were coming up dead...muggle born students. Salazar Slytherin believed that muggles should not be allowed to attend this school; that we taint the magic blood. That's where Malfoy got the idea. It's still common amongst most pure-blooded families." Harry nodded at the small history lesson but urged her to continue with a roll of his hand and wrist.

"The book says that the monster was hidden and locked in the Chamber of Secrets until the heir of Slytherin returns. And the message on the wall said that the heir of Slytherin has returned!"

Ron gulped "So the heir is really here and he set the monster loose?" his bottom lip quivered at the thought of a monster.

Hermione huffed at his antics, "Ron honestly! This is no time to be afraid!"

He looked at her incredulously and said "This is the perfect time to be afraid a bloody monster is on the loose!"

She rolled her eyes, "Now as I was saying, I believe the monster is a snake called the Basilisk. The Basilisk is a legendary reptile reputed to be king of serpents and said to have the power of causing death by a single glance. Legend says it can only be killed by severing the brain or head, or by gazing at itself in a mirror. However if it is gazed at through a reflection or not directly in the eye, without interference, it will cause the victim to become petrified. And Colin had his camera. I bet anything that he saw the basilisk through the lens! Somehow Harry can hear it. I have an explanation for that too."

Hermione turned to Harry, "Harry, do you remember over the summer when you told me you set a snake out on Dudley and it said thanks?" Harry nodded fervently in hope to get the answer out of her quicker.

"Well there is no way you could have heard that snake unless you were a parseltongue! Parseltongue is the language of snakes. It is in the common mind associated with Dark Magic. Harry you have a gift that most people in the Wizarding world see as a curse. It is extremely rare to be a parseltongue. It really goes against you

because the last known Parseltongues were Salazar Slytherin himself, and Voldemort. I don't know how you got the power Harry but the snake is loose in the castle and it's after muggle-borns like me. I don't know who the heir is but we know the person is in Slytherin."

"But what's going on with my sister! Why can she hear it too?" Ron was on the verge of tears. He was scared for his sister and himself. There was a giant snake on the loose, and what twelve year old wouldn't be scared?

"Ron this is where I want you to keep your mind open" he took a deep breath to steady himself and nodded for her to continue.

"I believe that whoever the heir is, is working through Ginny. She leaves and comes back tired. She said the snake is doing its job and she knows what is happening."

Ron stood up and shouted "It's NOT TRUE! She wouldn't do it!"

"If I get one more interruption out of that table you will be dismissed from the room!" Ron sat down at Madam Prince's threat.

Hermione grabbed Ron's arm and whispered, "I said keep calm! And besides I believe whoever it is, is controlling her with a spell like the imperious or something. It's the only thing besides possession that could take over a person like that. But the heir would have to be dead and I'm sure Dumbledore has wards against evil ghost in the school. So that leaves us with someone in the school using an unforgivable on Ginny to get her to do his or her dirty deeds."

Ron was in a state of shock. His little sister was being controlled by the Slytherin heir!

Harry was determined to save her no matter what she did in the past... "We got to save her, no matter what she did in the past" (**A/N: Sorry I couldn't help it laughs)**

Hermione nodded, "But how? I mean we can watch her every move? But she would notice."

"Not with Harry's cloak she won't. She doesn't know about the invisibility cloak! We can start tonight! I have to save her."

"Ron I really think we should tell Professor Dumbledore. He will help"

"NO Hermione. He has been helpful and trying to make up with me for what he did in the past but I don't think I trust him enough yet. He uses people. We must do this alone. And when we figure you who is controlling Ginny and where the Chamber is, we can tell him then."

Hermione was reluctant but agreed in the end.

Harry knew what Dumbledore was up to. ***He makes a huge mistake and tries to get on my side by helping with the school rumors, but he is a good manipulator. I don't want to trust him completely yet, it's still too soon.***

"So tonight then we follow her in Harry's cloak and see what is going on?" Ron was eager to help her.

"No, not tonight we have to make things seem normal as possible and I still want to research where the Chamber could be located. If she is actually going there then it may be warded to us. We have to be careful."

"But this is my sister!"

"I know Ron but Hermione is right. I want nothing more than to get her too. But we can't let it be known that we know about all of this. If the heir discovers we know most of the things happening, he may kill Ginny so she won't tell; that doesn't mean we can't watch her though. Just have to be discrete about it. In fact we have to get more of the attention turned to me."

Hermione and Ron looked at Harry in shock. "What the bloody hell are you on about? You were just moping about being in the attention a few minutes ago"

Hermione would have laughed if she didn't want to know the answer too.

"If I keep doing things to make them believe it's me, the heir wouldn't suspect we know. If everyone thinks it's me then the heir may slip up by getting too comfortable. And we can search better while pretending to be just as confused as everyone else, or in my case, moody and angry"

"Oh Harry that's a brilliant idea. I knew your angst was going to do us all some good" they all chuckled at Hermione's joke, mostly because she rarely told one.

"Now that we got that settled what's the next step in making you appear to be the heir. Because other than you, Malfoy is the next choice" Ron laughed at what he thought was a joke, but Harry and Hermione had an 'idea' look on their faces.

"Ron you're brilliant!" ***Wow I never thought I'd hear Hermione say that.***

"Erm...I am? Oh yeah I am...Why am I brilliant again?"

Hermione rolled her eyes. "People also think of Draco too. We have to eliminate him as a suspect since it really may be him. He will never be comfortable with every one thinking it's him too. I have an idea but we have to get Malfoy to throw a specific curse at you Harry. This plan would surely turn the attention to you. It's the **serpiente adsumo** spell. It conjures a snake to attack the person that the caster is thinking of. We have to ease the spell into his mind and show him how to use it. Then you boys fight over whatever, and he will surely use it. He's dirty and will use it to get ahead of you. You speak Parseltongue to it and it goes away. But it has to be done in front of enough people to start the rumors."

"But how will we get it to him, or find out if he's really the heir? And what if he's not the heir?" Ron nodded in agreement saying he was thinking of that question too.

"Well we can use polyjuice potion. It turns us into whoever we get a hair from. We will change for approximately one hour and we can use you two as Crabbe and Goyle and I can be Pansy. She is dumb but smart enough to know a few dark tricks. You two can get the truth out

of him by being his buffoons for an hour. If he's not the heir we can eliminate him off the list of Slytherins."

"Good idea Hermione. How long for the potion to be ready?"

She nibbled on her bottom lip and said "I don't know. It may be a little after Christmas, but it'll give us the time we need. We all are responsible for getting our persons hair. So do it as soon as possible and put it somewhere safe."

Ron was upset it would be that long, but knew the importance of keeping a low profile for his sister's sake. He would just keep helping her and keeping a close eye on her and protecting her at all cost.

Xxx BREAK TO LATER IN THE COMMON ROOM xxX

Harry was reading a book. Not just any book. But Hogwarts: A History. He read the book once for Hermione's sake, early in the summer. But you may be wondering how this came to be...again.

Hermione had an interesting way of getting him to read it. She threw the book on his lap and sat herself next to him. She opened the book to page one and started reading while he sat there and enjoyed her head on his shoulder. She smiled and looked at him then pointed to the beginning of page one, indicating that she wanted him to read with her. He rolled his eyes and started to read the book...again.

Later, Ron walked into the common room and groaned, "Oh no she turned you into her! Harry you have quidditch. Shouldn't you be practicing?"

Harry didn't look up from the book but still gave a half reply, "No. Not yet. In a bit though. Starts in a few days."

Ron rolled his eyes and smiled as he walked to the dorm. He may not say it now but he knew they were a good couple. And besides he had to think of his plan to watch Ginny.

Twenty minutes later they were finished with a few chapters of the book. Hermione was obviously a faster reader but she slowed down to keep up with him.

“Harry?”

“Yeah?”

“Why is quidditch being held off so long? I thought it would have started by now?”

“With all that’s going on they want to make sure we are safe. So now we have to practice with our Head of House on the field. All our practices have to be around McGonagall’s schedule”

“Oh...”

“Is there something you wanted to say Hermione?”

“Yes. If the Basilisk comes after me, promise me you won’t come in the way. You need to be here at all cost, because you’re the only parseltongue that we all know of and I know it has to be important to this puzzle”

Harry didn’t want to say yes, but he knew she was telling the truth.

“Okay. But you have to do me a favor...Carry a mirror at all times. If you have a feeling you are being followed get your mirror and wand just in case. I know I get that eerie feeling when I’m being followed, except it’s usually by Dudley’s gang, but you know what I mean. They can get you back if you’re petrified, not if...you know”

“I understand and I promise I’ll keep a mirror. The girls in my dorm would think I’m joining their side, but I’ll deal with that. Now let’s get back to chapter 5”

Harry would never tell Hermione but he actually liked Hogwarts: A History.

Oh let's face it with a pretty girl tucked under my arm, I'd read anything.

Chapter 14: Starting Plans

It was nearing Christmas and Harry Potter was a nervous wreck.

It was getting close to the time where they would put their plans into action. So far everything was going good. All the students were acting like they were comfortable around him, but secretly they all trembled with fear when he walked pass.

Harry got a little more respect from the older students. The 6th and 7th years had a hard time believing the rumors going on about Harry Potter, a second year, being the heir to Slytherin. It just didn't seem logical to them, he just seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The 5th year students weren't convinced until Harry was found in the hall next to a petrified boy named Justin.

The truth was Harry was coming from a meeting with Professor Sprout about his project with the mandrakes when he saw Justin lying petrified in puddle of water. Harry heard the footsteps of a group of students nearing. Instead of running he stayed and tried his best to look intimidating. The 5th year Ravenclaws checked over their friend and after the commotion wore down they looked up to find that Harry had already left.

Now that Harry had most of the school afraid, it was nearing time to carry out the rest of their plans. However, Harry seemed to be more nervous about the Christmas holidays.

He found Hermione and Ron sitting in the common at their table in the corner. It was very secluded, with low lighting, and a small tea table with three chairs spaced out around the tight area. He knew it was time to talk about their plans because it was the only time they sat there. Most of the Gryffindors had already gone to bed. There was a small group of 7th years sitting near the fire.

Harry cleared his throat and walked towards his friends.

He took the last vacant seat and leaned over giving Hermione a peck on the cheek.

"Ew. Guys, can you please keep the snogging to a minimum? I actually want to keep my dinner down."

"Well, I hardly call a peck on the cheek a snog Ronald. Besides, you stuffed yourself! It's not our faults you have food piled up halfway to your throat and the slightest thing can bring it back up. I mean honestly Ron it was just a ..."

"Well what are we going to talk about today!?" Harry cut Hermione off sensing a lecture that will turn into an argument, that won't end in Ron's favor.

Hermione cut him a sharp look but put a silencing charm around them so they could start their conversation.

"Ok. The polyjuice potion is almost ready. I say we'll give it another 4 days and it should be perfect. Did you get your hairs yet?"

Ron smirked and puffed out his chest. "I got mine! I waited until we were in DADA and when Crabbe walked by me, I pulled out one of his hairs."

"Umm mate, didn't he notice the prick from his head...you know the one you get when someone pulls your hair?"

Ron looked around and blushed. He wore an embarrassed expression, "Well remember that day I said I tripped over a pebble and got a black eye when I fell and hit my eye on a bigger rock?" After they nodded their heads affirmative, Ron continued "Well he kinda felt it and punched me in the eye. Hehehe."

Harry and Hermione threw their heads back in laughter. Good hearty laughter. Ron tried to laugh a bit, but he remembered how much it hurt getting that blasted hair.

"Oh Ron, that was the funniest thing I heard in ages. I mean I thought the excuse was horrid, but this is priceless." Harry thought of how weird it must have looked to the seventh years seeing two people laugh out loud with no sound.

After the laughter died down Hermione asked, “Harry did you get yours?”

Harry gave a barley noticeable nod, “Umm yeah I got it but it wasn’t easy. I waited until Transfiguration and took a hair from his hat that I stole. He saw me and was going to hit me but I...erm...well, I ran for it.”

Now it was Ron’s turn to roar with laughter, “You mean you actually ran!? At least I took my hit like a man” he ignored Hermione when she muttered –like a boy.

“Well on with the plans. Tomorrow we have to get you and Draco to duel in the dueling club. I mean it’s so much easier to do this now that they got that club going. We seen a few duels already and we know the way it’s going to be held. I planted the spell in Malfoy’s backpack. Last week I saw him studying the wand movements at dinner and mouthing the words.”

“How in the bloody hell can you tell he was practicing *that* spell? It could have been another one.”

“I studied it enough to read the incantation from his lips, Ronald”

“Will you stop calling me Ronald!? I have my named shortened for a reason Her- mi-on-eeeeeee”

“GUYS, please back to the plans...Now I think I may have run across a problem. I can’t just turn on and off this Parseltongue thing. How do I know I’ll be able to fend the snake off?”

Hermione chewed on her lower lip “I hadn’t exactly thought about that part Harry. Maybe you can give it a try now?”

“I hate potions”

“Me too mate, but what’s that got to do with anything?”

“I was trying to speak snake, but it obviously didn’t work”

“Oh well try it again then”

"Think of a snake Harry. Maybe it will work. And this time try not to bash any of our studies Harry" Ron rolled his eyes. *Leave it to Hermione to think about the well-being of a class in her presence.*

Harry pictured a snake in his mind and tried to speak to it "*I would kiss Hermione if a very nauseous Ron weren't sitting here*"

Ron looked astound. "Wow mate you just spoke like a snake! I didn't like the tone though. Sounded odd"

Hermione smiled with pride shinning in her eyes "Great work Harry. And I think the tone sounded rugged and a bit husky. Very nice though"

Harry's face began to redden. He didn't think Hermione would be able to pick that up in Parseltongue but once again he was proven wrong by his girlfriend.

Hermione let down the silencing charm and Ron spoke in a slightly louder voice. "So what are you going to do for the holidays? Mum says that I have to come home. We have to be there for Percy or something. He's getting ready for a summer internship with the Minister of Magic, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WINTER. So I have to get dolled up and pretend to be the interested in Percy's future"

"Umm...Ron, mate. Did you say you'll get dolled up?" Harry could barley hold in his snicker.

"Oh shut up Harry. You know what I mean?" He could have sworn he heard Ron mumble something about – a guy can get dolled up. ***I hope I imagined it.***

"Well we're going home. My parents owled and said they wanted to go on a Christmas trip"

"We are going home? Th-they invited me too?"

"Well of course Harry. Did you forget? You are family now. They want to take us to my grandmother's house then we all are going on a trip from there! Our Christmases are always so much fun. Don't worry you'll love it"

Ron got up and walked over to the chess set then he looked at Harry. Hermione rolled her eyes and pulled out a book. This was beginning to become a routine for them.

Talk about plans, casual conversation, chess/reading, head to bed.

Harry would never say this out loud but he was giddy. He'd finally get to experience a real Christmas and it was all thanks to Hermione and her parents. The thoughts of tomorrow came into mind. He would have to pick a fight and duel Malfoy then later use the potion to get in the Slytherin common room.

Tomorrow is going to be a long day.

THE NEXT DAY

Hermione was sitting in class taking notes on everything Professor Bins was saying. This is usually something Hermione found easy to do. She wasn't a slacker and knew that the better you take notes the better you can study. This time, however this wasn't an easy task to do. Harry Potter was leaning on her right shoulder with his head drooped, eyes closed, and this arm draped over her shoulder. Ronald Weasley was leaning on Harry with a small puddle of drool forming on his best friend's sweater.

All the weight was making Hermione's arm go numb, not to mention, her boyfriend asleep and his warm breathing on her ear was making her lose concentration. She would never admit that she would find herself drifting off in class thinking of Harry and then thinking of how to perfect their plans to make sure he wouldn't be in any real danger.

Professor Bin's lecture was over and everyone but Hermione was asleep. He sighed and nodded towards Hermione. She knew the drill. She had to do it all the time.

She pulled out her wand and made a loud noise erupt from it. Ron jerked awake with a snore and the rest of the class awoke and began packing their things.

The trio left the class, fully awake and well rested, and immediately set their plans into action.

"Okay there is Malfoy. Do you two know what to do?" Ron and Harry nodded affirmative and Hermione walked over towards the group of Slytherins.

She picked up her pace and bumped into Pansy, who was latched onto Draco's left arm. And all three of them went falling to the floor with a thump.

"Watch where you walk! I don't want your filth tainting my family's blood." Raged Draco.

"Oh please. You taint you family more than I can ever do, with all the hair gel seeping through to your brain."

The group of students in the hall snickered at Hermione's crack on the slick haired Slytherin.

Draco clenched his jaws and pulled out his wand and aimed it at her face. "How dare you disrespect me! You filthy mudblood. I'll teach you to respect your superiors!"

Before he could utter a spell, Harry and Ron stepped in front of Hermione and had their wands drawn at him.

"If you want to duel somebody, why don't you duel me?"

"Why would I duel you Potter! Taking up for your filthy girlfriend here?"

"Actually I am. Plus, I thought I'll save you the embarrassment. And don't call her filthy"

"You're mad. Why would I be embarrassed? Because the mudblood made one lousy wise crack on me? HA! You have another thing coming if you think she can bring me down. I refuse to be hurt by a mudblood and her half-blood boyfriend."

"I was talking about being embarrassed from when she would have kicked your arse in a fight. And if you call her that again I'll-"

"You'll what! Go running to your precious Dumbledore?"

"No. I'll be sure to make you suffer."

"You know Potter. I think we *do* need to duel. I can put you and your MUDBLOOD back in your places."

Ron spoke up, "Well we know who our dueling volunteers will be in the dueling club today. That's if Malfoy doesn't chicken out."

"I'll be there. And don't address me you blood-traitor" With that said, Malfoy turned on his heel and walked away with his goons and groupies following close behind.

Harry turned to congratulate his friends on setting the first stage of their plan when he noticed everyone staring at the group.

He scrunched up his face and said "Well. There's nothing left to see here. If you want action come to the duel tonight."

The group scattered with the gossip of the duel between Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy.

This news spread even faster with the twins working on their new fireworks. The grounds were filled with sparkles and explosions of a mini raven haired, green-eyed boy hexing a blond haired, grey-eyed boy. Then a scroll of fireworks rolled across the sky,

SEE POTTER VS MALFOY TONIGHT AT 7 IN THE DUELING CLUB.
THE BOY-WHO-LIVED VS THE HAIR-THE-COULDN'T-MOVE-IF-IT-TRIED---EVEN IN THE WIND. *No tickets will be sold because we will get months of detention if we made a profit from a school activity...but we are more than welcome to accept your donations.*

Things couldn't have been better. The twins inadvertently made it even better for them. Now most of the school will be there to witness the fight for themselves and there will be no more doubt from the 6th and 7th years. Harry Potter will be thought to be the heir to Slytherin by the end of the night.

BREAK TO ummm...LATER

The trio was huddled around the foul smelling potion.

“So. Is it done yet?” That was the fifth time he asked that question in three minutes.

“Be patient Ronald. It will be complete at approximately 9:15 tonight.

“Be patient? Be patient! It’s been almost 3 months! You never complain when Harry asks ‘how is the potion going’. You only complain with me!”

“Maybe it’s because Harry asks how it’s going once a week. He doesn’t ask ‘is it done yet’ while standing next to it himself. Maybe if you stopped being lazy, you could lean over and see for YOURSELF.”

“It’s not like I know what to look for!”

“Well stop stuffing you face everyday and read a book!”

“Why read when I have a dictionary next to me, nagging all day about work work work!”

“WHY, YOU BAST-“

“ENOUGH” Hermione and Ron look over at Harry. He was absolutely fuming. “I have had enough of this. You two argue way too much! I can see if it was over something with a purpose, but it’s not! Hermione, there was no need to yell at Ron over the potion”

Ron smirked at Hermione, clearly saying ‘na na na na naaa’. “And Ron, quit being annoying. The potion is right there. And if Hermione didn’t tell us about homework, we would never get it done. We need her help.” Ron looked down and grumbled what Harry assumed was an apology to Hermione. Hermione nodded back and he smiled at their seven year old antics.

“Awww that was so sweet” someone screeched from the second stall.

“What the bloody hell was that! I thought you said no one comes in here!?”

“They don’t that was just Myrtle”

Even Harry had to look at Hermione a bit weird. "Who?"

"Moaning Myrtle, the ghost of this restroom. She's why no one comes in here anymore"

Myrtle flew out and stopped in front of Harry and batted her eyelashes. "So you're Harry Potter. I'd rather be called the undead thank you very much. But you can call me Moaning." She flirtatiously blushed and giggled at Harry.

Harry took a few steps back, "Erm. Isn't your name Myrtle? Why would I call you moaning?"

Myrtle giggled and said, "I'm sure you can give me reasons Harry" and she flew next to Hermione laughing at her own joke, that Hermione didn't think was funny at all.

Harry and Ron leaned their heads to the side trying to understand Myrtles joke. Hermione frowned and told Myrtle to shove off and leave Harry alone.

A while later Harry tried to strike up conversation, "So, Moaning. How did you get dead. Umm I mean, you know, how'd you die?"

Hermione rolled her eyes at long story that was coming up. She heard her tell it plenty of times. And leave it to Harry to flush even when a ghost flirts a bit.

"Ooohhhhhh. I'd love to tell my tale for Harry. To make a long story short, I was crying in my stall and a big monster came from out of nowhere and I saw these scary bright yellow eyes and woke up right here in my favorite stall, where I stayed for the all this time"

"You do know you're dead don't you?" Ron was obviously a bit scared of the floating girl, who seemed a little psychotic.

"OF COURSE I KNOW I'M DEAD! I'M NOT STUPID YOU KNOW! I'M JUST A POOR MUDBLOOD!" The trio looked shocked at Myrtle's outburst. When they stayed silent she continued, "Well at lease that what Tom used to call me. What a nasty word to use"

"You never said anything about a boy named Tom before? What was he like?" Hermione was obviously curious.

"Tom was a bad boy. He was really cute, but he hated me and said muggle borns should not be allowed to attend *his* prestigious school for pure bloods." Myrtle dramatically chocked back a sob, "He is the one who made me cry in my stall everyday." She pointed to the second stall that she flew from. "He had great hair though. I think he liked me. He would always sneak in here and pretend not to notice me. But I noticed my dear Tommy." She giggled and it echoed around the lavatory.

Hermione gasped and looked around the lavatory they were in. "I don't know how I didn't see it before! Guys do you know what this means!"

Harry nodded his head affirmative and Ron nodded slowly-looked at his friends and said "Moaning likes bad boys! I think she'll do well with Malfoy. Let's introduce them!"

Hermione slapped Ron in the back of the head for being so stupid. Then she slapped Harry in the head for not knowing why Ron's idea was so stupid and having a look that said 'he would have agreed to Ron's suggestion'.

"You guys don't listen! The big thing with yellow eyes was the basilisk. Remember, it kills with one direct glance. And then there was a boy named Tom. He had good hair and thought he was better than any muggle born. Don't you get it! He must have been the last heir! It makes it all easier for us. Now we have a motivation!"

Ron looked puzzled, "Okay the last heir's was named Tom, but are we acting? What's this whole motivation thing?"

Hermione gave Ron a look that stated 'you can't possible be that oblivious'

"Look and listen to me! Both of you! Now all we have to do tonight is ask Draco if he had an uncle named Tom and get him to talk about what happened last time the chamber was opened. We can also tell

that there is something important about this room! He was here a sneaking in and out—“

“Oh, no need to worry about that part! I know he was spying on me, to check and see if he really hurt me. He checked on me from that sink over there. Tommy was dreamy.” Myrtle giggled and it eerily echoed around the lavatory again.

“No offence Myrtle, but I doubt this Tom really liked you. There is probably something to do with the Chamber of Secrets in here. We just don’t know what. But we’ll find out. Right guys?”

Harry and Ron stared open mouthed at Hermione and gave a slight nod. ***How did she figure all that out from a crazy ghost named Moaning?***

Ron spoke his thought out loud, “You learned all that from a story from Moaning?”

“Yes I did” Hermione smiled at her analysis, and Harry could tell she was immensely excited that she figured out another piece to the puzzle. She turned back to the boys and said, “Her name is Myrtle! Stop calling her Moaning. She was trying to tell a joke that wasn’t funny” And she glared at Myrtle, who giggled and flew into her stall.

Harry followed her out into the hall and yelled “OH I get the joke now!” then fell into a fit of laughter before making a gagging noise.

Ron followed after Harry saying, “I want to laugh too! Come on guys what’s the joke! Harry can make her—oh. Ew. That’s disgusting! Who would ever make her cry again! Ha ha”

His friends paused and looked at him. “Yeah mate. That was the joke”

Ron frowned, hearing the sarcasm in Harry’s voice, and continued to ask about the joke as they walked to the Great Hall for the duel.

THE GREAT HALL

When the trio arrived in the Great Hall they rolled their eyes at their DADA professor taking pictures and posing with adoring fan girls. Snape walked over and announced “Now that Potter has graced us with his presence, we can start this duel”

Lockhart jumped onto a table and yelled “Yes! Um Professor Snape is right! Now boys come here.” Harry and Draco stood on the table and it was only then Harry noticed how full the room was. It looked like the whole school was there to see this duel. “Now there will be a good clean duel here. No forbidden curses!”

Gilderoy looked into the crowd and put on one of his most dazzling smiles and said “Of course you all will know the forbidden curses if you got my latest book ‘Forbidden Curses for Dummies and How to repel Them, By Gilderoy Lockhart’ Girls squealed and held out books to get signed. Lockhart smiled and waved his hand “Oh stop you all are making the Sexiest Wizard Alive blush, well I don’t boast but it *is* what Witch Weekly named me...three years in a row”

Snape cut in and pushed Lockhart into his crowd of adoring fans. “On with this duel on the count of three” He took a step onto the end of the table, behind Draco, “One...Two...THREE”

Harry aimed at a book in some Ravenclaw girl’s hand and said “Wingardium Leviosa” and sent the book flying towards Draco’s head.

He easily blocked it and smirked, “It’s going to take more than a first year spell to get me Potter! STUPIFY!”

Harry pulled out his wand with force and yelled “PROTEGO!”

“Oh you know a trick or two Potter. Dodge this!” Draco turned and stole a note from Harry. He levitated a chair at Harry at full speed. Harry jumped down to the flat surface and jumped back up after the chair zoomed past his head.

“Wow, Potter is more of an athlete outside of Quidditch. **Serpiente adsumo!**”

Everyone in the Great Hall gasped. There, slithering at full speed towards Harry, was a Cobra at attention and ready to attack.

Harry stiffened and looked at the snake, “*Stop!*” The snake stopped, “*Listen to me carefully. I’m not here to harm you. Turn and face the one that called you and scare him off. He’s here to use you to harm others*”

The cobra nodded and turned and slithered back over to Draco who looked scared out of his mind. The snake crawled up his leg, to his sweater and around his shoulder and looked face to....face with the Slytherin boy and gave a long hiss. Harry smirked at how he realized the snake was a female snake, and she yelled “JERK”.

Draco screamed and Snape walked up and yelled “Serpiente recedo” the snake disappeared with a flash and the entire Great Hall stared open mouthed at Harry Potter.

Break...To common room with the trio

It was nearing 9:00 and the trio was sitting in the common room not completely calm from all the hype that day.

“Can you believe it!? They all believed it. Harry you’re the baddest guy in the school!”

“Ugh. Baddest is not a word. It’s worst. And he’s right. Everyone believes you’re the heir. Now we have to finish the rest tonight to get solid proof that Draco is the heir.”

Harry nodded and looked at Ron “Have you gotten anymore info from Ginny?”

“No. She’s getting better though. She said she got rid of it. I don’t know what she’s on about. But whatever happened she’s better. She’s eating normally, not sneaking off, and she seems fine now”

Hermione frowned, deep in thought, “Well that’s good, but did she say what she got rid of?” Ron shook his head no.

“It doesn’t matter. It’s all over. Whatever it was it’s not with her anymore. Do you think that the heir could have used something that put the imperious on her whenever she touched it?”

Hermione looked at Harry, "I don't know. I'll search the library about controlling someone through objects. Maybe that will help?"

Harry gave Hermione a small smile and said "I'm sure that'll help" Hermione blushed at the look Harry was giving her. She felt good helping him like this. She felt like she actually had a purpose. All the time in grade school she was ignored by everyone but Harry and that was more than anything she could have asked for. Now she has him as a boyfriend and it feels 4x better being needed by him as much as she needs him.

Ron rolled his eyes at his two friends making goo goo eyes at each other. He cleared his throat and said "Well I'm going upstairs to get my hair...um you know what I mean"

Harry and Hermione sat back on the couch and cuddled up and watched the fire before they had to put their last plan into action. In a few minutes they will find out the truth about the heir.

Me: I don't own Harry Potter!

Harry Potter: Y..yo..You don't?

Me: Sorry Harry, but I don't.

Hermione: So this means Harry and I aren't together?

Me: nods head yes

Harry and Hermione: cries

Ron: So is there a chance of me and Hermione getting together in the real books!?

**Me: Don't get too happy Ron! I can still kill you off in my story!
AND WIPE THAT GRIN OFF YOUR FACE!**

Josh: pops in and laughs at Ron I've been telling you to kill off Ron for months and you just think of it now!!!!...YAY No more Ron!!!!

Me: Still not happening so stop singing

Josh: Pouts and walks way mumbling about killing Ron off himself

Recap:

In a few minutes they will find out the truth about the heir.

Chapter 15: Well....She Had Part of It

Harry was sitting with Hermione waiting on Ron. He first assumed it'll be a 2 or 3 minutes wait. **How long can it take to get a hair hidden under the pillow?** It had been 10 minutes and Ron had not shown up yet. That's when a thought struck him. **OH no Ron. What if he lost it!**

“Hermione, I better go and check on Ron. He's been up there 10 minutes and I'm worried that he may need help”

Hermione looked at how nervous Harry looked and said “Ok but hurry back we really need to be there in 5 minutes!”

Harry nodded and dashed up the stairs to the boys dorms. He saw Ron sitting on his bed looking panicked!

“Ron!”

“Erm, hi Harry”

“Don’t you ‘hi Harry me’ I know something happened. What is it?”

“Well you remember how I hid the hair under my pillow in a tube?” Harry nodded yes and urged Ron to continue. “Well Crabbe’s hair was in the tube but it must have fell and broke.”

“What do you mean it *must have fell and broke!* Did the tube break or not!?”

“Yeah Harry! What the bloody hell did you think I was implying! I should be more nervous than you anyway! There were a lot of scary things under my bed, but only 3 hairs around that length! One was obviously mine! You know, when I went gruff look!” Harry rolled his eyes at Ron, “But I know it’s mine because it’s red. But the other two are black and the same length! I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO DO!”

“Come on Ron! This was supposed to be the easy part! We already had the hairs. All we had to do was take them to the potion!”

“Don’t blame me! Look Neville is waking up. Let’s go ask Hermione”

Harry grabbed his invisibility cloak and followed Ron out of the room.

When they got downstairs Hermione rushed over. She grabbed Harry’s cloak and threw it over them and shuffled them along to the girl’s restroom.

When they arrived Myrtle laughed and said, “Hi Harry bear! Come to see me again. Oh you pulled your friends with you. You don’t love ME!?” The eccentric ghost cried and flew to her favorite stall while Hermione poured three goblets filled with the polyjuice potion.

"Okay the potion is ready and I sent the notes after the duel! They are going to meet us in the 3rd floor cupboard. In 15 minutes! All we need to do is put the hairs in and it'll be ready for drinking" Hermione put the hair in her goblet and it bubbled and it bubbled and emitted a foul smell. Her stomach lurched at the thought of drinking it but she knew it had to be done. She put the potion to her lips and noticed that the boys were still looking at her. "What?"

Harry looked at Ron and then back at his potion. He put Goyle's hair in it and he had a similar reaction to Hermione.

Hermione narrowed her eyes at Ron. "What are you waiting for? Put Crabbe's hair in and drink"

"Erm. You see. What happened was...erm...I *may* have put it under my pillow and it *may* have broken and I *may* have two hairs that could be Goyle's"

"What do you mean you *may*!?"

"What? Now you too? Harry didn't get it and now the smart one doesn-'

"I KNOW WHAT YOU MEANT RON! How could you mess up!?" Harry snickered. "Don't you dare laugh!" his smile dropped.

"Look it's no big deal! I'll pick the one that I think is Goyle's!" Ron looked at the hairs and examined them and dropped one into his potion.

Hermione rolled her eyes, "If you turn into a rat don't blame me." She looked down at the foul potion and said "Bottoms up!"

The three friends hurriedly downed their potions hoping to get it over with faster. They all took a brief look at one another and covered their mouths on their run to the stalls.

Harry wanted to let out a yell of panic. He never thought it'll feel like this. He could literally feel his structure start to change. It wasn't painful, but it did feel odd. Vision clearing, growing several inches,

gaining a bit of weight, it was all just odd. Luckily, it ended before his fear took over.

Well, that wasn't that hard! It only scared me senseless for five seconds!

He heard a stall burst open and he heard Hermione's voice "Harry? Are you okay? What about you Ron?"

Harry stepped out of the stall to see Pansy looking at him with care. It was almost scary. Every time he saw Pansy she was glaring at him over Malfoy's shoulder. But this Pansy had Hermione's expressions written all over her face. Then Ron walked out of his stall.

Harry looked up at Ron in shock and Hermione glared at him. "Ugh. Here I was laying it into Ron about doing badly with the potion and you messed up Harry! How did you do this!? I didn't even think it was possible."

Harry tapped her shoulder and she looked back at Goyle standing there with as much confusion as her. "Hermione, I'm Harry" Hermione's mouth formed a small O and she turned back to Ron to see Harry standing there.

Ron looked nervous and said "Surprise?"

Hermione looked furious. "You turned into HARRY! Ron the plan is ruined! What will we do!?"

"You and Harry can go on with the plan and say that Crabbe got sick from too many muffins or something. I'll go back to the common room and lay low."

Hermione looked skeptical, but agreed. "Come on Harry we have to go and meet Pansy, Crabbe, and Goyle to still go on with the plans."

Harry looked over at Ron and threw him his glasses, "You'll need those mate"

"Man Harry! You're as blind as mum's blind brother Uncle Lester!"

Harry laughed and ran after Hermione.

They arrived outside the cupboard and Hermione leaned her ear against it and heard the other three teens muttering.

"Pansy, I thought you said he would be here!"

"He did Goyle! He wrote me a letter saying for us to meet him here and don't bring wands. He probably wants to feel superior again. You know we aren't allowed to have our wands out in his presence unless he okay's it! Since the meeting is secret he doesn't want us to have it!"

Crabbe spoke up, "He said all that in the note?"

"NO! But you can assume that's why we weren't supposed to bring the wands! ...Unless it's a trap!" Pansy reached for the handle to discover it had been locked.

Hermione muttered "silencio" and no one could hear the banging on the door. She smiled and pulled Harry along to the Slytherin dorms.

OUTSIDE THE SLYTHERIN ENTRANCE PORTRAIT

(I'll refer to Harry and Hermione as Goyle and Pansy)

"OH NO! We don't know the password!" Pansy was frantic as they paced in front of the portrait of a slick haired man who resembled Snape in his younger years.

"Umm...Pure-blood!"

The portrait looked at Goyle and said; "Well we know you're a pure-blood, but what's the password" When Goyle looked at the portrait like he didn't know what to say, the portrait spoke up, "Well this won't be the first time you forgot! I'll let you in again but only because I don't want Draco setting my painting on fire again! Now ENTER"

They walked into the green and silver common room that eerily reminded them of being in the cold dungeons

"WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN GOYLE! You are late! And why is Pansy with you!"

"Oh I was umm just"

"Figures you can't form a sentence! Sit down and make sure I can't see your wands!"

Goyle took a seat at the table with their names labeled. ***They label their seats!? What's that about?***

Draco took his seat across from Goyle, and motioned for Pansy to sit besides him.

"Now! Where is Crabbe?"

"He said something about too many puffin' muffin' cakes. I assume he's in the toilet letting it all out."

Draco smirked and said, "I always liked when you help me with these buffoons! Good work this time babe!" And he threw his arm around Pansy.

He has his arm around my girl. I'd crack his wand across his head if I weren't in this body!

"WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE SCOWLING AT!?" Malfoy jumped up and pointed his wand at Goyle's face.

"I was scowling at-

"THE fact that Crabbe is somewhere on the toilet. Don't let this idiot get to you Draco"

Draco looked at Pansy and smirked. "Well that is a rather foul thing to imagine. Just watch how you scowl!"

Goyle nodded ***He doesn't even give his own friends respect! This is all up to Hermione then.***

As if on cue, Pansy spoke up, "So Draco, what are your plans for the winter holiday?"

“My father and my mother will be away, but I still have other family coming over...and you of course.”

“I’m staying with you for the break?”

“Are you feeling well? You and your parents come over every holiday. We’re betrothed! We won’t be married for another eight years or so. And our parents agreed that I can date other people until then.”

“I’m sorry Draco. I can’t believe I asked that stupid question”

“You’re forgiven then” Pansy gave a pleading looked to Goyle. It was obvious that she couldn’t ask about family, since she must have known his family from all the visits.

Goyle looked a bit upset but he went along anyway. “What about uncle Tom? Will he be there?”

“Uncle Tom? Are you using a muggle saying around me!?”

“N...no. I was just asking about your uncle whose name is Tom”

“Greg you should know by now that I have no uncle named Tom! You’re at every gathering too!”

“Oh sorry Draco”

Draco stood up and paced around the common room. He looked upset.

I hope we don’t have to run for it! He may be catching on

“Pansy! Greg! We’ve got to do something about Potter! I can’t believe he beat me in that duel. The thing is he spoke Parseltongue!”

“What’s the big deal about that?” Harry was having a hard time trying to dumb it down as Goyle.

“The *big deal* is the last heir of Slytherin was a parslemouth! My dad told me all about it, but he’s never been able to track down the heir. The rumors say that Potter is the heir, but I’m starting to believe that they aren’t just rumors.”

"Why would your dad want to get the heir?" Hermione's inquisitive side was starting to show a bit too much.

Draco frowned at her and said, "If we can manipulate the heir we'll have him under our control. If it's really Potter, then we'll have troubles. The old bumbling fool keeps him under watch and we can't get to him"

Goyle looked over to Pansy to see shock written all over her face.

I have to get her out of here now! She's not being like Pansy at all! Draco isn't that dumb.

The truth was, Hermione really tried to keep her scowl, but everything she thought about the heir just completely fell apart. She couldn't hide the shock and disappointment written on Pansy's face.

Goyle stood up. "I better go fetch Crabbe. He's taking a long time."

"Since when did you learn to tell time!?" Draco honestly looked shocked, but he relented and told Goyle to go on and fetch Crabbe.

Pansy stood too, "I'll go help this idiot get him Draco. He got lost on his way back the last time."

Malfoy nodded and absentmindedly flicked his wand and the door flew open.

Gryffindore Common Room

They rushed into the common room, after saying the passwords. Harry saw himself sitting by the fire and noted that the rest of the room was empty. He took his invisibility cloak and rushed over to Ron.

But he stopped short when he saw the look on his face. Ron looked afraid. When he noticed his friends he tried to look his best, but failed miserably.

Harry was going to speak up but he noticed he was shrinking. He looked at his hands and noticed they were bubbling the same way they did when he changed in the first place.

I must be changing back to normal. His vision blurred. **Yep I'm back!**

Ron handed him his glasses back, and they took a seat next to their friend.

"Ron, what's wrong? Did something happen?" Hermione had no idea what was bothering Ron but she's never seen him that afraid before.

Ron had been looking at his hands the whole time, nervously wringing them and fumbling with them. "First I want to know what happened with you guys. Was it really Malfoy?" He almost sounded desperate. Like he hoped Malfoy was the heir.

Hermione hung her head. "No Ron. I was wrong about the heir. I feel so bad. I let you guys down. I was sure he was the heir. Now we have no idea who it is. I'm sorry; I shouldn't have assumed it was him."

"Hermione there was no way we could blame you. We all thought it was him. Don't blame yourself. We don't. Tell her Ron. It's not her fault" Harry was hoping that Ron caught on, but Ron seemed to not want to look up. "Ron?" Harry nudged his shoulder.

Ron looked up with pure rage etching on his face. "What do you mean it's not her fault!? She led us to believe everything! My sister was in more danger!"

"What are you on about Ron? You're the one who suggested it was him in the first place! She didn't do it. I know I thought it was him. There is no one else in this school that hates muggle-borns more than that slick haired snake!"

"I just don't know what to do! Ginny is scaring me. She was fine but she just told you something" He put emphasis on you by poking a finger at Harry. "Well she thought she was telling you. She told me instead."

"What's this got to do with you mistreating Hermione? You're mad about Ginny and take it out on her?"

"I well I...umm yes?" ***Well at least he looks ashamed of what he did.***

"Okay. Okay. I'm sorry but you weren't only wrong about Malfoy. WE weren't only wrong about him." Harry and Hermione looked puzzled.

Hermione took a deep breath and asked "What was it that Ginny told you Ron?"

Flashback:

Ginny Weasley walked down to the common room and saw Harry Potter sitting alone. She had been meaning to talk to him for a while but never got the chance.

"H..Harry?"

Harry looked a bit shocked and uncomfortable but he responded anyway. "Yes"

"May I speak with you? I promise it's not about you and Hermione or anything like that"

He seemed to relax at that and motioned for her to take the seat across from him.

She took the seat and said, "Harry I've been going to Ron telling him about what has been scaring me lately. I'm sure he's told you since he never shuts up!"

Harry scowled at the last part.

"But Harry I never told my brother something. I'm afraid of his reaction." Harry nodded for her to continue. "It isn't a student here that's controlling me. It's a student of the past. All I know is he was the LAST heir" Ron was trying to process the information given to him by his sister.

"What do you mean a past heir? Is he still alive? Is he in here?"

Ginny smiled, "I'm glad you're concerned Harry but I've gotten it taken care of. No need to worry. Now I really want to say I'm sorry about you and Hermione. I don't want to cause anymore trouble for you two. I'm still a little mad but after everything that happened and you both still care about me...I'm just sorry"

"But Ginny he could still be out there!"

"HARRY! He's not. I took care of it. Now drop it all. I don't want to remember anymore of it. It wasn't fun Harry. It was the worst and I don't want to relive it" She had tears in her eyes and he didn't push her to talk about it anymore.

He smiled at her and said, "We forgive you, no need to worry about that."

Ginny looked nervous again. "Um Harry? I know you're with Hermione and all, but do you think you can give me my first kiss anyway? Just because I don't want to date you doesn't mean I don't think my first kiss shouldn't be with you." She leaned in a little too close for his liking. Her face was closing in on his! He pushed her back with more force than he meant to use and she flew back into her chair.

Harry jumped up and started pacing, "I ...erm...you. NO! NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS!!! Maybe you should find a nice Hufflepuff Boy. Yeah yeah that's it! A Hufflepuff! ANDWHAT DO YOU MEAN KISS!? YOU'RE WAY TOO YOUNG. MAYBE IN ABOUT 15 MORE YEARS! You can ask that Hufflepuff for a little peck....ON THE CHEEK!"

"In 15 years I'll be 26!"

"Good! You need to be more responsible and level headed when you make such a big step!"

"I wouldn't have thought a kiss was the biggest step I'd make in my life. I've never seen you act like that before! I'm kinda glad you said no. You sounded just like Ron when you said that. And I'd rather not kiss people like my brother. So maybe we should be friends or better yet like family?"

“You know, you’re real quick to change your mind. That’s exactly why I said wait until you’re 26! You girls don’t know what you want!”

Ginny smiled and gave Harry a hug. “Thanks Harry. And tell Hermione thanks when you see her. And stop hanging with Ron. You even rant like him.” she ran back up to the girl’s dorm and he sat there thinking of how whoever was controlling his sister was very much still alive and here.

End flashback

Ron said, “So...I guess I forgave Gin for you eh?”

Harry nodded and Ron excused himself for bed.

“I can’t believe it” Hermione still looked shocked and hurt at what Ron said about her.

“Yeah, Ginny almost kissed Ron”

Hermione was going to leave too but Harry stopped her. “Hermione, no one blames you”

“It sure seemed like Ron did”

“Since when do you really care about Ron’s opinion about you? He was mad and he even kinda apologized. Hermione we are all confused. We were all sure it was Malfoy. One thing we did learn is that there is no new heir. The old one is still around somehow. Maybe we can talk to Myrtle more after the break?”

Hermione nodded and then suddenly said “Oh I completely forgot! My parents sent a letter saying they need to speak with you when you come home. It’s important.”

“Erm did they say what we were going to talk about? Was it bad? Am I gonna die from your dad!? Did he realize we’re too young!? I swear I never thought about doing anything more than a kiss –“

“Harry, calm down. It’s important, not bad. They said it was about some letters they have been receiving at home. You said they can

open your mail in case there was something with the emancipation that came late. And I guess they've been doing it. So they just want to speak about some letters”

Harry was a little relieved, but he was still afraid of Tim. He may have been a nice man but he was very intimidating. “So did he say anything about what the letters said?”

Hermione laughed and said, “Don’t worry Harry, he won’t do anything...I think”

“You think! You’re trying to scare me on purpose.”

“You should see your face. Let’s head to the dorms. We have to be ready for the train tomorrow.”

“Okay. Goodnight Hermione”

“Night Harry”

NEXT DAY

Harry awoke to someone shaking his shoulder.

“Honestly Harry! We’ll be late! Even Ron is awake!”

Harry knew that voice, but he really didn’t care. He had his pillow tucked under his head just right. And his bed had actually taken shape around his body. He really didn’t want to move.

“If we’re late my dad will skin you alive”

Ugh. She learned how to get me up, using her father and my fear of him.

“Okay okay, I’m up!”

“Good because I packed your trunk! We have to go now. So shower and meet us downstairs”

Harry grudgingly slumped to the showers. Once he was fresh, dressed and fully awake he walked to the common room to meet his friends.

Ron was jumping on his trunk trying to get it closed. Ginny and Hermione were laughing at the red headed boy.

Harry said, "And you rushed me! You guys are down here playing around! Let's go then!"

Hermione muttered a spell to help Ron with his trunk and Ron said, "Well if you knew that all along you could have helped me from the start!"

Hermione rolled her eyes and walked out with Harry.

9 3/4

Harry helped Hermione off the train. He had her backpack, school trunk, and bag full of her light reading; then there was his trunk.

"OH HARRY, HERMIONE! I hope you have a wonderful Christmas Break. Why didn't you stay over our house this break? Oh you can still come. Come on go ask your parents Hermione!"

Hermione still didn't like Mrs. Weasley much. She was too pushy for her liking.

"Mrs. Weasley I have a family I would like to see during some part of my childhood and –"

"She means we had plans. Sorry Mrs. Weasley"

Molly didn't seem to notice that Hermione had almost told her off.

"Okay, see you later children!" she pulled them into a hug and sent them off.

They walked through the brick wall and Hermione spotted her parents and ran full speed towards them, leaving Harry pulling all of their things.

When Harry made his way over, Rachael pulled him into her arms.
“I’ve missed you too Harry! Wow I think you grew a bit over the months”

“Now Rach, leave the boy alone! He didn’t even say hi to me yet.”
Tim gave a mock pout and pulled Harry into a man hug and said.
“Now that that is over with, let’s help the poor boy”

They walked to the car and Harry and Hermione piled in the back seat. On the drive home, Tim looked at Harry in the rearview mirror.

“Did Hermione tell you that we needed to talk to you?”

“Uh. Yes she did.” Harry was nervous again, and it showed.

Tim narrowed his eyes then smiled. “No need to worry Harry. When we get home we all have some business to discuss”

Harry looked over to Hermione and she looked at him then out the window.

What could be so important!

Joshy: Why do you tell me you do then?

Jay: I thought she only told me that!? Did you lie to me?

Joshy: Yeah did you lie to THE JOSH?

Me: Erm well, not really.....I may have said I was writing book 7 that day, but I meant book 7 of my people 'to do' before I die....I have Usher and Orlando Bloom so far.

Joshy: it took 7 books to write 2 names!?

Me: blushes I may have written it close to 1,000,000 times but I hear they like that.

Jay: You're sick, you know that right?

Me: Shut up you asses I have to start the story. You boys shouldn't think they are hot anyway...unless you forgot to tell me something.

Joshy: Well Orlando does have those nice eyes Dreamy smile

Me and Jay: stares at Joshy Did he just come out the closet?

Jay: Please go back in there.

Joshy: Smiles and winks at Jay

Recap:

Tim narrowed his eyes then smiled. "No need to worry Harry. When we get home we all have some business to discuss"

Harry looked over to Hermione and she looked at him then out the window.

What could be so important!

Chapter 16: Who is this woman?

The ride home was absolutely brutal for Harry; it took forever for them to get home. He couldn't help but scowl at the thought of how slow Mr.

Granger drove. He jumped out the car before it even made a complete stop.

"Harry! Hun you could have been hurt. Next time wait until the car has stopped." He nodded and gave her a small smile hoping she wasn't too mad at him. Hermione got out of the car after him.

She gently placed her hand on his arm, "Harry, calm down. My father was only messing with you! I mean sure it took him three hours to get us home from the station but—"

"But it's only 45 minutes away!"

Hermione shot him a disapproving look, "The point is there is no need for you to get all worked up. He said there was nothing to worry about. You will simply talk business."

"Do you know what business we'll discuss then?"

"Um...no. But if he said not to worry then don't" She smiled and kissed him on the cheek and walked into the house, leaving Harry wondering, **what's got her so chipper! I'm a bloody wreck and she skips right along to the house... Women.**

Harry saw Tim struggling with Hermione's trunk and ran over to help him. "I'll help with the trunk. She packs a lot of books" Harry walked over and pulled the trunk right out.

Tim looked incredulously at the little boy. "Have you been working out Harry!? Is there a fitness gym at the school of yours?"

Harry looked at his arms and chest. **I still look the same to me.** "No. Why'd you ask?"

"Well first off, you just lifted *that* out of the boot! I struggle every year trying to load and unload her things, and you just pulled it right out!"

"Maybe someone is messing with you then. Maybe they made it lighter for people with magic or something?" Harry walked toward the house, Tim following close behind him.

Tim raised an eyebrow at Harry as they stepped into the house and dropped the trunks, "I hope so. I'd rather it be a joke, than thinking that a 12 year old is stronger than me. I'm not that old yet."

They both looked around the room to see that Rachael and Hermione were nowhere to be found. Tim took this as a sign to start talking to Harry.

OH god no! What did I do to deserve this!?

Harry stopped his mental rant when he realized that Tim looked nervous too.

"So...erm Harry, my boy. Have a seat lad!" *No, that didn't sound right; I sound like my father.* He cleared his throat and tried again. "Um...take a seat Harry."

Harry nodded and sat on the couch opposite of 'The King's Chair', as Tim liked to call it. He sat staring at the man. He seemed to be gathering his thoughts.

He sat up in his chair and leaned in a little. He opened his mouth to speak, paused and shut his mouth again.

Harry frowned, ***well, this is unexpected. He's scared stiff.***

Time had similar thoughts, *I can't believe this! I'm scared stiff! Okay just stay calm, lets start with the light work first!*

"Harry well the first thing I want to discuss with you is of serious matter" Harry gave a slight nod. "You gave us permission to check your mail, in case something came late about the emancipation right?" Harry nodded again and he began to look worried.

I hope everything went through. Oh no! I have to go back with the Dursley's!

"No need to look alarmed Harry. We have been noticing a lot of letters from that wizarding bank Gringotts. After a while we got curious and opened those letters too. I hope you aren't mad about that?"

"Oh, no not at all! I thought it was going to be something serious. I gave you permission to open my mail no need to worry about that at all"

"Well Harry that wasn't all of the business." Tim chuckled at Harry's eagerness to leave the conversation at that. "You see, you are an adult in both worlds. Sure you are young, but your world pulled strings to get those things official. The thing is, you have fees to pay now Harry-"

"I know I paid a tax bill I got from Gringotts in September. It wasn't anything big."

"But that was only one thing Harry. You inherited all of your parents things; jewelry, investments, properties, and then there is the huge mounds of gold you must have piled in your vault." Harry nodded wondering where this conversation was going.

"You owe money for the property you own and you have responsibility over companies that your family owned. Before you were emancipated all of that stuff was automatically deducted from the accounts you have, but since you never signed to have it taken care of, the fees are adding up to quite a bit." Tim paused and let Harry soak it all in.

Harry looked up and nodded when he was ready for him to continue.

"Now, I'm sure you can pay your fees without even putting a dent in your wallet, but the investments need attention. The four properties need attention. And I don't know exactly what to tell you Harry; I'm not a part of your world. I only know the basics. You have to figure out a way to handle those things."

Harry nodded and ran his hand through his hair. "Well what if I pay people I can trust to take care of it?"

Tim frowned, "It's a good idea Harry but you have a lot of valuable things, you need to know for sure who is trustworthy"

"I trust you"

“Me! But, but I don’t know-”

“You said you know the basics. All I want you and Mrs. Granger to do is pay my banking fees once a month. I’ll allow you to access my accounts and set up another one for your pay.”

“Well Harry that’s a good idea to take care of the payments, but I can’t accept your ummm...galleons.”

“Don’t worry about it. I want to pay you.”

Tim was reluctant to let a 12 year old adult pay him. He felt like he was taking money again. The boy already tricked them into letting him pay a small room and board fee, a simple 25 pounds a month. But this was too far, maybe he can make up a compromise.

“Well okay, but it will be deposited into Hermione’s account for her school things” Harry nodded. “Now what will you do about the investments? Neither Rachael nor I know anything about wizarding world, except that it exists. We don’t know enough to handle the investments.”

“I know. That’s why I’ll ask Arthur Weasley. He is a pure blood and knows all about the ways to go about these things. So I’ll talk to him about managing my investments. I can go to Gringotts and set up the monthly deposits to Hermione’s account and then ask Mr. Weasley to meet me there to discuss the investments. I can have Mrs. Weasley handle the properties until I get someone else to do it all. She loves to be busy and during the school year she only has Arthur so I’m hoping she would like the job.

Tim smiled at Harry. “You’ve gotten a bit of self-esteem! That’s great Harry. You know how to handle your business. Do like all the other rich people and pay others to take care of it.” Tim was laughing out loud at the thought of Harry tossing out money to ‘the little people’

Harry didn’t see it that way though “Do you think I’m just pushing it off to the side? I can try to handle it myself. I just thought that with school and quidditch-”

"No. It's not irresponsible at all. It's good. You help the people you care for when they help you. I remember you told me the Weasley family wasn't exactly swimming in gold. It's nice that you'll hire them to help. And at the rate that Hermione's going we don't have enough to buy a new wizarding book every two days. Last year, Hermione had no friends so she was always at the book store getting new things to occupy her time. I decided to get her a card for kids that takes the money from my account to hers personal credit card. I thought she was responsible enough for it; and it would teach good money management. Imagine my shock when I got five-hundred pounds debited from my bank account, all from the same book store in one day"

Harry had to laugh at that. He could see Hermione walking around with her credit card out in one hand like the rich girls on TV. Except, instead of a dozen store clerks carrying bags of clothes, they were struggling with her books hoping they wouldn't fall.

"It was only a matter of time before she asked for that library we wouldn't let her get" They roared in laughter and Rachael stepped in.

"Tim, I didn't think the conversations you needed to have with Harry would be funny."

"Well it seems that Harry here is now my boss. We have more business to take of at the end of the holiday, but the idea is in motion. He'll hire us to do bank fees, and the Weasleys for the rest."

"Oh that's terrific! How did the other conversation go?"

Tim paled at the thought of the other conversation. "Oh ...erm we didn't get there yet honey, but maybe you should do it. You know, you're all motherly and stuff and I'm a guy." She ignored him while she made her way back to the kitchen. "Oh come on! I'm going to mess it up!" When he realized she wasn't coming back he sat down in defeat.

"So...this isn't the end of the discussion?"

"No Harry. I'm really nervous but I must know." Harry waited for Tim to ask. "I mean you're my daughter's boyfriend. It's funny how I hate

saying that. But there is no stopping Rach and Hermione. I tell ya they can-

"Um. Tim? Maybe you should just go on with the conversation. I mean it can't be worse than the other business" Tim gulped.

"Okay then, Harry. I know you and Hermione are still young and you ARE NOT going to even THINK about doing this but..." He pouted and said "Rachael is making me give you the talk"

Harry's eyes bulged out and he tried to make a run for it. Tim grabbed his arm before he could get away. "Now, listen Harry, this is three times as bad for me as it is for you. But *she* said that 'this is the age that boys get this talk from father figures! He will grow up miserable and feel unloved and blah blah blah'. My dad didn't give me the talk, but I did have my older brother do it when I was about your age." Harry tried to run again, but Tim had a firm grip.

"Now we can do this the easy way and you sit and listen carefully, or we could do this the hard way. That's when I sit you down and show you the birth tape then you sit and listen carefully anyway"

Harry immediately sat down and paid attention. Tim smiled, "Good. Because I personally don't want to see that again."

In The Kitchen

"Mum, do you think Harry should suffer through this alone? I know it was like torture when you gave me the talk"

"Well if you care so much you can go sit through it with your father...and you know how he is. He'll start off afraid to speak, then get in vivid details like he does with new guest"

Hermione's eyes widened. Her father was always nervous when meeting new people. But at the end of the night, he'll share even the most intimate details with them. "Poor Harry"

Almost an hour later

Harry sat slightly twitching in the family room. Tim dismissed him and he ran to his room. Hermione entered soon after. He was sitting on his bed and looked to be in thought.

"Harry?" He snapped his head up and then glanced back at the carpet. "I didn't know that was going to happen until my mum pulled me off into the kitchen. She told me about how you plan on taking care of your business at Gringotts. I think it's a good idea, that's good for you and school. You couldn't possible do all that alone"

Harry shook his head ignoring what Hermione said "You have no idea what I went through Hermione. It was horrible. I'm afraid to go to sleep. It's almost as bad as Aunt Marge in her thon...I can't bring myself to say it!"

She pulled him into a hug, "You're afraid and you don't even know my Gram yet" His eyes widened in fear. She smiled and said "Goodnight". Harry stared at the spot where she was once standing.

Why is she always so happy!

The Next Day

Harry awoke at 11:31am. ***I haven't slept that long in ages.*** He slept so long he was tense when he woke up. He felt like he slept in the same position all night.

Harry got up and stretched his limbs. He heard a few faint pops as his muscles and joints got adapted to standing up.

As he walked downstairs he could smell breakfast. ***Mmmmm. Smells like eggs and toast.***

"Good morning Harry. We just had eggs and toast." Harry chuckled at how happy Rachael was and how Tim looked depressed.

"Good morning Rachael. Mr. Granger, are you okay?"

Tim lifted his head up and looked sharply at Harry. "Do I look okay? The old bat is coming today!"

Rachael sped across the kitchen and whacked Tim in the back of the head. “Don’t talk about mum that way! She’s absolutely wonderful.”

Tim rolled his eyes and Rachael scoffed, “She raised me and my sister on her own. She was very hardworking and loving”

“Exactly hun. She WAS very hardworking and loving. Now she’s just lazy and evil”

Harry chocked on his toast and tried not to laugh. Mrs. Granger’s eye began to twitch and Tim cowered behind his newspaper.

Rachael spoke to Harry while looking at Tim with her twitching eye. “Harry dear, maybe you should go and wake Hermione”

Harry got the hint and ran up stairs and he heard “You are in so much trouble!”

He gathered his breath as he stood outside Hermione’s room. When he was sure Rachael wasn’t going to run after him for laughing at Tim’s joke, he opened the door.

Hermione had her head under her pillow and her feet were thrown across the bed. Harry walked over, forgetting about the summer warning, and tapped Hermione’s shoulder. Without warning her foot shot out and kicked Harry in a place that he’s rather not be kicked. Harry doubled over in pain and fell next to her on her bed. His head hit her arm and her fist shot out giving him, what he assumed to be, a black eye.

Oh Merlin, the pain! Where did she learn to hit like that!?

When he saw her arm twitch again, he jumped up and fell out of the bed. “HERMIONE! WAKE UP”

She jumped up and looked around her room. She saw no one. She panicked and jumped out of her bed, only to hear a grunt and step on something other than her carpet.

She was standing on Harry’s back. “HARRY! Oh my god, I’m so sorry for stepping on you, but what were you doing on my floor?” Harry

looked at her incredulously, and began to tell the painful and scary tale of what happened after he woke up.

Hermione was in tears by the time he finished telling everything. She was laughing almost as hard as when Ron told them about his black eye.

After showering and getting ready for the day they went downstairs to see if Tim was still breathing. Harry saw him sitting in his chair, with his arms folded and a pout on his face.

He looked up at them and said, “*She’ll* be here in ten minutes”

Hermione smiled brightly and ran over to hug her father “Cheer up dad, Gram is so nice!”

Harry laughed as Hermione left the room to find her mother. “Don’t laugh; you sure won’t be laughing when she gets here!”

The smile fell from Harry’s face, and he went to the kitchen to find the Granger women excitedly about Hermione’s gram.

“Oh Harry, you’re here! We were just going to go over ground rules with you. My gram knows I’m a witch, but she’s not really comfortable with talking about it so keep the Hogwarts talk to a minimum.” Harry nodded

One rule isn’t bad at all.

“And she likes all of us to call her Gram. Only mum and Aunt Alexis, Alex for short, can call her mum.”

Okay, two rules aren’t bad.

“She doesn’t like anyone talking back to her. And if you do answer, please answer her question only, she hates when people give more than asked.”

That’s a little fussy but what can I expect.

“Don’t treat her like she’s old, she hates that too”

This is going to be a long week

Rachael stepped into the conversation, "Hermione dear you forgot the most important thing. Harry, never touch mum's dog Taz, he will bite off your fingers. He's very protective of mum and if he doesn't trust you, you will get bit. So it's best not to touch him at all," She looked Harry over and said, "Harry dear, try to walk straight and...is your eye swollen?! What happened?"

Hermione blushed and Harry frowned. Mrs. Granger smirked at Harry, "You woke her up the wrong way didn't you? I gave you a warning this summer, but you kids today never want to listen."

Then they heard Tim scrabble in the other room and the kitchen doors burst open. Tim looked horrified, "RUN FOR IT HARRY! SHE'S HERE!"

Do what he said and RUN!

Harry was going to make a dash for it but Rachael put a firm hand on his shoulder and pulled him along with Hermione to the door, while Tim tried to put on a 'happy smile'.

Harry opened the door to see an average height woman with grey hair and brilliant hazel eyes. She looked like a typical grandmother. She looked to be about 60, because Mrs. Granger was going on 36.

And behind her was a very attractive woman. She had long flowing brown hair and hazel eyes. She looked exactly like Hermione and her mother...just an in between version. She looked to be about 27 and she walked like she knew she was what men want, but she carried an atmosphere about her that scream 'I'm no fool'.

The oldest woman hit the cab driver with her purse and said "I can carry my own bags, no need to try to get closer to me! I'm much older than you...unless you're 25 to 26, then we can talk"

The cab driver's eyes widened and he hastily said, "Sorry I'm 24 and three-fourths" then jumped in the car and drove off.

Harry gulped as both women turned towards them. ***How can I be scared, nervous, and trying not to drool at the same time!!! I need to stay focused.***

Hermione and her mum ran over to them and they all engulfed each other in hugs. Tim made eye contact with Harry. It was only then that Harry realized exactly what he was in for.

The women walked toward the house, with Hermione running through first, Rachael second, Gram walked by while crinkling her nose at Harry, and last was Hermione's unnaturally attractive Aunt, who gave him a wink and a pat on the shoulder.

Harry blushed as red as he could get. As he was stepping into the house Tim pulled him back and pushed his back against the wall and spoke like they were planning the next war.. "Now Harry there are two of us now, but you *will* break. You're just a boy and Gram has made me want to cry on many occasions. And stop blushing! Alex will get you in trouble. She doesn't do it on purpose, she's just bloody hot! And blushing like that will get you the silent treatment."

Harry nodded and Mr. Granger stood up and fixed his shirt, "Good. Because I haven't had a time yet when I didn't have to sleep on the couch, after a visit from Alex...I tend to say the wrong things." Then he narrowed his eyes at Harry, "You AREN'T old enough to even think of saying the wrong thing, got that"

Harry nodded again while thinking ***I'm glad you couldn't hear my thoughts a minute ago!***

Tim looked at Harry, "Don't think I don't know what you were thinking a minute ago" then he mumbled, "cause I was thinking the same thing"

"Timitus! Get in here and give greetings!" they winced at the shrill voice calling Tim. Harry followed him into the house and found Gram standing with a disapproving look on her face.

Harry looked over to Tim to see him with an extremely wide smile "Gram, it's so nice to see you again. I was just talking to young Harry here"

Oh crap it's my turn

She looked at Harry expectantly, “Well...who are you to us? I get lost with all the grand children I have. Oh that’s right Alex here won’t have any” Alex rolled her eyes at her mothers blatant hint for more grandchildren.

Hermione stood between her grand mother and Harry, “Gram this is my boyfriend Harry”

I think her face can only be described as priceless...no wait! There's also heart attack and shock.

“BOYFRIEND?!” Alexis and Gram both burst out at the same time.

Then Alex smirked, “I had to sneak a boyfriend at that age” she nudged Hermione’s shoulder “good job too. He’s cute”

Gram glared at Hermione and said, “Boyfriend! You are far too young for a boyfriend.” Then she looked at Harry and said “I’m sorry young hairy boy, but she’s too young to date so just go and skip along to your house and come back in ten years”

Tim was thinking *Oh no she's going to think I'm a horrible father and then she'll kill me.*

She hates me and looks like she's going to kill me.

She turned Harry around and gave him a little push towards the door. Taz, the toy poodle, jumped out of her dog bag and barked at Harry.

“Mum! I allowed her to have a boyfriend because I felt it’s better than her sneaking like Alex did.” Alexis glared at the older sister, “I remember you said you were more furious that she lied to you. They were honest and we allow it, we just watch them closely. Very closely” Gram went back to her grand mother smile and ushered her girls to the kitchen.

Tim gave Harry an ‘I told you so look’. “Don’t look at me like that Timitus!”

Tim glared at Harry. "My name is Timothy, she's just an old bugger who messes it up on purpose. But you would agree wouldn't you Hairy Boy?"

DINNER

Dinner was quite the talkative affair between the females at the table. Harry and Tim were sulking at the other end of the table.

So far Tim got beat with a purse twice and bit by Taz once. Harry on the other hand had four small bite marks on his shoe and he was sure it went through to his toes. It would explain his slight limp.

"So Harry, when are you going home?" Gram was really blunt with what she really wanted to know.

"Well I am home. You see the story is actually interesting" Hermione winced when he said that.

"I didn't ask about the story. I wanted to know when. However, the answer you gave for that is quite shocking" She looked at her daughter waiting for her to answer.

"Mum, Harry lives here with us. He used to live next door but they abused him. At the time he and Hermione were best friends, and we invited him to our home. He's a legal adult though. But this way is better for everyone"

Gram pursed her lips but nodded in agreement. Alexis gushed with happiness. "This is so cute! My little Hermione and her new boyfriend, all together and they will grow old and live happily ever after" Hermione turned her head and laughed at her aunt's tactics.

After that Gram stared at Harry the whole time. He was sure that she was checking him over.

Maybe she's thinking of ways to sneak in and let the dog attack me!

After dinner, she pursed her lips and said goodnight to everyone and went to bed with her dog following obediently after her.

Harry and Hermione were washing dishes as the other three adults got set up for a movie.

They heard Tim mumble something and Rachael yelled “ON THE COUCH TONIGHT!”

Hermione laughed. “Dad always says something about Aunt Alexis growing up, and how mum used to look exactly like her. She gets mad because he’s implying that she isn’t beautiful now”

Note to self never mention anything like that to Hermione....She'll look like that!?

“I messed up didn’t I? I went on with a story and I made her go to bed early”

“No Harry she always sleeps after dinner. Something about slow metabolism and it was only one mistake. My dad got beat three times. You didn’t get one so, good job...Harry?”

“Hmmm?”

“Stop drooling at my aunt. It gets annoying” She grinned at the shocked look on his face.

Harry decided to tease her, “Yeah and besides you’ll be ten times hotter than her when you grow up.... OUCH!” She swatted him in the back of the head.

“What do you mean when I grow up!?”

“You already look ten times better. I was only joking Hermione” she gave him a mock glare and blushed.

Harry smiled and kissed her cheek and they headed up to their rooms for the night. He had to get to sleep early if he was ready to start the Family Winter Vacation.

Joshy: Hehe you said sue!

Jay: rolls eyes There is nothing that you could possibly get from that, that can turn ‘sue’ around into meaning something else.

Meg: I thought you knew him by now. He can turn anything around.

Me: Oh yeah! This is Meg. She's another reviewer turned chat buddy, and she's just as bad as Jay when it comes to making me write. I seriously had a 3-way MSN conversation with them that consisted of GO WRITE about 50-100 times. Shudders at the memory

Joshy: Whispers something into Monisa's ear and makes her giggle, then runs away with a maniacal laugh looking at Jay and Meg

Me: How he came up with something was beyond me.

Recap:

“You already look ten times better. I was only joking Hermione” she gave him a mock glare and blushed.

Harry smiled and kissed her cheek and they headed up to their rooms for the night. He had to get to sleep early if he was ready to start the Family Winter Vacation.

Chapter 17: Christmas and Anticipation

Harry awoke the next morning to an unfamiliar noise. He scrunched up his face and tried to focus his hearing. There was a low grumbling growl coming from in front of him. The more he focused on the sound, the closer it seemed to get.

What is that noise? Am I that hungry? I was stuffed at dinner last night and I'm sure that growl is not coming from my stomach.

Harry was beginning to feel uncomfortable. He was pretty sure that there was warm breathing on his face. Normally this would have

cause alarm, but Harry was far to snuggle in his bed to be jumpy. He'll just have to settle with keeping his eyes closed and scrunching his face up.

If something were going to get me, it would have done it by now...OUCH! What the hell was that!?

Harry sprang up and looked towards his hand, where the sharp pain was coming from, and saw Taz gnawing on his thumb. Harry shook his hand and sent the little dog flying off the bed.

His thumb had two little cuts and it was already starting to swell. Harry looked over at the barking dog, and jumped out of his bed in anger towards Taz.

Just as he rounded on the dog, he was stopped from his possible rumble, by someone loudly clearing their throat.

Harry spun around to the door and saw Gram standing there, staring at him with a disapproving look on her face.

If looks could kill, I'd be dead and buried. I'm sure she could beat any dark wizard with that stare.

"Umm I was just-"

"No need to explain; I seen it all. Breakfast is ready" She turned her cold glare from Harry to Taz and gave a simple command "Come".

Was she talking to me or that mutt?

Harry didn't want to take any chances and he fell in step behind the obedient dog. When he reached the kitchen he saw that everyone else was already at the table waiting to start their morning meal.

Harry took the last seat in between Alex and Hermione. "Sorry for waking up so late, I was just so comfortable. And lately, Hermione has been waking me up in my dorm room, so I guess I just over slept" Harry finished with a chuckle.

Four forks hit their plates with a loud clatter, and the four adults in the room gave Harry glares that demanded an explanation.

It took Harry a few seconds to comprehend what they were sharing at him for. His face expression went from confusion, to realization, to embarrassment, and finally fear. “OH! NO! What I meant was...she she she she she-”

“On every weekend I have to go and force Harry to wake up. Sometimes he get up on his own. But weekends is like his timed ‘sleep in until 5:00 in the evening’ day. Today is Saturday and it’s on that schedule again.”

Gram and Tim still had frowns in their faces but went back to breakfast. Everything was quiet; too quiet for Harry’s liking.

Gram cleared her throat, effectively grabbing everyone’s attention. “I walked upstairs to wake up Jerry over there” she pointed a finger at Harry, “and he was beating my poor dog. He threw my Taz clear across the room.” With that being said, there was a mix of expressions at the Granger table.

Harry looked horrified, Hermione looked confused, Alex rolled her eyes, Rachael looked upset, and Tim was grinning widely.

“Jerry was asleep and I didn’t want to wake the boy. I sent Taz to the bed to give him a little nudge and he threw my dog.”

“That’s not true!” Alexis snapped her head to Harry with wide eyes and choked on her juice.

Tim’s smile got wider.

Harry was outraged! He jumped from his seat and yelled, “I did no such thing! That mutt was growling in my face and it bit my thumb! I shook my hand and the dog fell off the bed and continued to bark at me! How can you accuse me of doing something like that!? I admit I did want to attack Taz after he bit me but you were sure to stop it there and not while that THING was gnawing on my hand!” Harry put up the bruised thumb to show that he wasn’t lying. “I’m sorry Gram, but I especially don’t like when people make up stories about me. I

had a lot of that at the Dursleys and at school." Harry sat down and looked slightly ashamed for speaking to Hermione's grandmother that way.

Tim couldn't contain it anymore. He exploded in laughter while the women looked at the twelve year old boy in amazement.

Gram stood up abruptly and said "I am going to get my bags. Everyone in the car in 15 minutes or we will miss our flight! TIMITUS HELP ME WITH MY LUGGAGE!"

Tim looked at her in shock as she left to her bedroom. "She wants me to treat her like a lady? She never asks me to carry her bags. Usually the old bat gathers strength and carries all of her things out to the car like a muscle man."

Rachael glared at Tim and dragged him to the pile of luggage waiting by the door. Alexis gave a slight nod and Hermione left the room.

Harry turned to Alex to find that she was already standing behind him. "Come with me Harry".

Harry nodded and allowed himself to be led through the house and up to his room.

Gulp...I didn't even know I could think a gulp!

She went over to Harry's packed bags and opened them. She pulled out a pair of boxers, blue jeans, a deep blue sweater, and she even got his socks.

She got up sat down on the bed, sat the things behind her and signaled for Harry to have a seat next to her.

Did it just get hot in here? It must have. It would explain my throat going dry.

Harry took a seat next to her and gulped again. "Harry, about what you just said to my mum," ***oh no, she's going to be upset with me too.*** "It was bloody amazing!"

I'm sure she is gonna ... wait... WHAT

“Huh?”

“Harry no one stands up to mum like that. Well, no one that’s outside of me and Rach. Hermione has never had to and all the boyfriends we’ve had are deathly afraid of her. I couldn’t even count how many blokes got away from me because of that woman.”

Harry clearly didn’t grasp what she was saying.

“Harry! You’ve just stood up to her. She may not tell you this right off top, but mum would rather a guy stand up to her when it’s about something like that. She was clearly lying about what happened. Usually guys just sit there and let her go on and on about them and make up lies. She wants her girls to date someone respectful but not a complete push over. So she tests them. We all can tell that you are a nice guy so you’re okay with that test. That Tim is such a git. It’s been sixteen years and he still just mumbles behind her back. Rachael got tired of waiting from him to do something about it and married him anyway. Mum doesn’t like him because she says he’s an idiot who doesn’t deserve her daughter...I guess he waited too long” She shrugged.

“So you’re telling me that standing up to her was good because I passed some kind of protective mother test!?” Alexis nodded. Harry smiled and said “cool”.

“Yeah Harry, it’s really cool. But be careful Taz still doesn’t like you. He may take a while to warm up to you...Put those clothes on and be downstairs in...” she looked at her watch “7 minutes”.

Harry walked into the restroom thinking ***maybe she's not as bad as I thought.***

Later on the plane

Harry was sitting next to Hermione on the plane. She had a death grip on his hand.

“Hermione, we’re safe”

She looked at him like he just sprouted another head. "We are not safe. We are thousands of feet off the ground. We are safe when I am away from this horrible flying contraption!"

Tim leaned over and whispered to Harry "Hermione's afraid of heights. She gets like this every trip we take. You'd think she would have gotten used to it by now."

Harry laughed and turned to his girlfriend, "So where exactly are we going? I didn't want to say anything about the plans because I know that they seem different from what we said in Hogwarts. You said we'd visit your grand mum and go somewhere but..." Harry trailed off hoping that Hermione would talk and loosen up.

"I don't know Harry, they changed the plans. Gram and Aunt Alexis came here, and now we're going to Val d'Isère ski resort in France. Mum said we have a cabin a mile away from the resort actually. We'll be there until 2 days before it's time to back to school. I think it will be quite cozy. I hope it will. Gram's been wanting to hit the slopes for a while now."

Harry laughed at the thought of gram skiing 3 mph down the slopes. Hermione continued to ramble on and on throughout the rest of the trip. Rachael and Alexis talked about anything and everything they could think of.

Tim was fighting Taz who was in Gram's dog bag. The little bugger kept trying to tear off his arm. Gram gave Taz a treat every time he took a bite at Tim.

Harry smiled and glowed in anticipation of his first family trip.

In France

The party of 7, including Taz, made their way into the cabin. It was pretty big and spacious. It had 2 stories. The first floor was nice and cozy. It had a fairly large Christmas tree in the center of the front room, and off to the right were 3 small couches surrounding a large TV. To the left was an open dining room set with six chairs around the table.

Right pass the dining room was the kitchen. It was decorated beautifully with a great view of the back garden. There were rows and rows of trees, but even between the trees, lights were visible from other houses filled with families that wanted to be away from the busy ski resort.

Upstairs was 3 bedrooms. One with a queen sized bed, another with two with full sized beds, and the last room had two twin beds. The whole cabin was decorated in beautiful Christmas ornaments.

Outside the front windows was an amazing view. They could see the mountains and slopes, with a great view of the resort lights and the people walking around the shops at night.

After the family settled in, they had something to discuss.

“Who will get what room?” Alexis wasn’t expecting a full-blown argument to start when she said that.

Tim said “Well since this was the last cabin available we thought me and Rach will get the room with the queen sized bed, Gram and Alexis will get the room with the two full sized bed, while Harry and Hermione get the room with the two twin sized beds” He felt proud of himself. Not a stutter, or anything; he spoke clearly in front of Gram.

Gram narrowed her eyes “I think sharing a room is unacceptable for certain people!”

Tim smiled, “See I already thought of that. Hermione and Harry will sleep with their doors open at all times” He puffed out his chest for having thought of that possibility already.

Gram growled, “Not them you imbecile! I’m talking about you.”

Tim’s mouth dropped open and he gaped like a fish. “ME!?”

“Yes you! I can’t control you in your house, but we are on vacation! I know what married couples do on vacation! You smooch and hug and make more Grangers! And you expect me to sleep in a full sized bed hearing what is going on a few doors down? You were sadly mistaken”

Alexis put her hands to her mouth to hide her smile. Harry and Hermione tried to think happy thoughts, to prevent them from thinking along to Gram's implications. Rachael looked expectantly at her husband hoping he'll say something to her mum. To her dismay he didn't say what she wanted to hear.

"Oh well then, what would you suggest Gram?" Harry could tell it strained Tim to utter that sentence. He looked like he would start twitching any moment now.

"Let's see, I can share the queen sized bed with my grand daughter. My two girls can share a room with the full size beds. You and Harry and have the twin beds"

Harry smirked and Tim grunted.

"Now everyone to the television! I have old home movies!"

Tim followed behind the crowd with a slump and dragging feet. *Leave it to old people to spoil my holiday fun.*

Harry had to admit so far everything was fine for him. He even got to see a 2-year-old Hermione running starkers with the book, *Green Eggs and Ham*, in her hands. She escaped from her bath and was yelling "I do not like them Sam I am. I do not like green eggs and ham." as Tim chased after her with a bath towel. She made a vow to blow his toe-sucking picture up and put it in a banner on the front of their house if he didn't stop laughing at her. Naturally that shut Harry right up.

Rachael, Hermione and Alex went to the kitchen to make tea, leaving Gram, Tim, and Harry...in one room...alone...together.

Tim tried to ignore Gram's attempts to get his attention, but that only lead to her smacking him in the back of the head. "I have to talk to Harry. Don't you have something to attend to Timitus?"

"No. And before you ask, I already unpacked my things."

Gram narrowed her eyes, "Well unpack mine then! I like my underwear folded!"

"But I have to touch your bloomers?! Can't I just put it on you bed and you put them away!?" She gave her son-in-law a glare and he stomped up the stairs.

She turned her attention to Harry. "Young man, I understand Alex spoke to you about my little test." Harry nodded affirmative.

"You must understand that I am not entirely comfortable with Hermione *dating* at such a young age, but you seem like a decent, strong, respectable boy. Have you had the talk yet?"

Harry's eyes widened and he hastily replied yes.

"Oh believe me I wasn't going to give you the talk. I do want you to know that if you hurt my grand daughter I will make sure you cannot sit on those broom stick thingy's without a seat cushion." Then she turned her frown into a smile and gave the startled boy a grandmotherly hug.

Harry awkwardly put a hand on her back and gave her a pat. She smiled and headed towards the kitchen.

Later that night Gram put everyone to bed early, "We'll have an early day tomorrow, so everyone head to bed. You too Timitus"

Harry and Tim were sharing a room like Gram said. Tim's feet hung off the bed and it took him ages to get comfortable. Harry was lying there getting ready to drift off to sleep when Tim spoke.

"She's being nicer to you for some reason. Yet the hag up there keeps calling me Timitus and won't even let me share a room with my wife. And yet she calls you Harry!"

Harry chuckled at the older man's child like behavior. "Maybe if you didn't talk about her behind her back and stood up for yourself she would be nicer to you."

He huffed, "Nicer. Don't make me laugh Harry. And standing up for yourself is the last thing you want to do to her. She'll eat you alive. I mean literally. I'm sure that's what happened to that bellboy in the

hotel last year. He told her not to give him mini Listerine bottles as a tip and I didn't see that boy again. Seemed like a nice chap though."

Harry laughed. ***Tim seems like a really nice guy. He's even warming up to me. He would have let me share a room with Hermione even...why would he do that?***

"Tim, can I ask a question?"

"You just did, but I'll let you get another one"

"Why would have you allowed me to share a room with Hermione? I mean I know it was nice and all, I just can't help but wonder what made you do it. Even at home you follow us around with a watchful eye."

"You're a nice boy Harry. I trust you...almost completely with my daughter." Harry was touched at those words. Sure it wasn't complete trust but what father would? "Besides, this was the last available room that even came close to fitting all of us, and neither of the couches downstairs had a fold out bed."

Harry chuckled at Tim and rolled over anticipating tomorrow's activities.

December 23rd

Harry wasn't so sure about this.

What am I doing up here?

Gram was giving him safety lessons on his first ski down a slope and he wasn't paying attention.

"Do you understand Harry?"

"Can we start from the beginning again? I may have missed one, two, or nine parts."

Gram gave him a pat on the back and laughed good-naturedly. "The others are all ready at the bottom! Try to keep up with me Harry"

Well at least that's the plus side to this. I have to keep up with Gram. I'll stumble and maybe fall down the slope, but she'll be going way too slow to-

Harry didn't get to finish his sentence because Gram gave him a not so gentle push to start his journey downhill. He may have wobbled to the sides, and did a few uncoordinated slides, but at least he didn't feel like he was in danger of tumbling down the mountain anymore.

Hey I'm setting the hang of this! Oh I must have left Gram in my dust...or snow. I hope she's okay.

Just as he finished his thought, Gram went speeding past him with her old, stiff back oddly straightened to the perfect ski posture.

As Harry reached the end of the run, he realized he didn't know how to stop. So he did the only thing he could do. He fell backwards and landed on his butt.

Gram came to help him up. "This time you should pay attention when I give my instructions, Harry". He nodded and patted his slightly sore bum and got ready for another go at the slopes.

By the end of the day Harry was skiing almost as well as Hermione and her parents. He really enjoyed it. With the speed it was as close as he got to actually flying (without a plane) in the muggle world.

After a while, Gram let loose and beat them all in every race. He was still amazed that she was very good.

Rachael had finally talked her mother into giving Tim a break and letting them share a room and go by his original plans.

Gram grudgingly agreed, leaving Harry and Hermione in their room with the door open.

"Gram says tomorrow we will do our last minute Christmas shopping. I know you grabbed enough from Gringotts to shop so you should get up early to get the things you want to get."

Harry frowned a bit and wondered what to get Hermione for Christmas. He knew this would be a hard task for the morning.
“Goodnight Hermione”

“Goodnight Harry” she mumbled sleepily. And with that, the preteens were out for the night.

December 24th

Harry had a long day Christmas shopping with the others but it was nearing 7:00pm. And he finally had all of his presents for everyone. After putting all of the wrapped presents under the tree, he went upstairs to meet Hermione because she said after shopping, that they would wrap their presents and meet up for a surprise.

Harry walked into the room to see Hermione putting on her coat. “Hurry up Harry. Mum said we could go to into the resort as long as we’re back before 9:00 and I have something fun to do”

Harry didn’t need to be told twice. Harry was dressed and waiting outside before she could get on her last shoe. Tim dropped them off and Hermione lead the way through the resort. She stopped in front of an ice skating rink. There were tons of people their age there and a few families and couples. ***This is nice. Happy faces, skating and...GRAM!***

Gram was skating around the rink gracefully, while pulling Taz in his dog sled. As she glided pass Harry and Hermione she gave a quaint smile and continued along her way.

“Have you ever skated before Harry?”

“No. The Dursley’s would never take me skating. I don’t even think they ever went to skate anyway. You know, Vernon and Dudley in skates and all”

Those poor skates. Having to hold all that weight.

Harry didn’t even notice Hermione still talking.

"Well then....Harry, pay attention! I was giving you instructions on how to skate. Now come on lets get out there"

"Wait Hermione. I wasn't listening. I'm gonna fall." His protests were futile; she had already pulled him onto the ice.

Harry was shocked that he got the hang of it after falling only seventeen times. But it was nearing the end of the day and they had to return to their cabin. Hermione made it very clear that they were to be home before 9:00 that night.

Upon arrival Harry immediately noticed the smell of cookies...or was it gingerbread? Maybe it was both. They walked into the kitchen to see Rachael and Alex cleaning up after making tons of cookies and gingerbread houses. Hermione's eyes lit up at the site.

This was part of their yearly tradition. Gram takes Hermione to do something fun, her mum and Aunt Alex bake cookies and set up the gingerbread houses, while Tim fights with Taz for male dominance over the remote until it's time to decorate the tree.

Rachael looked up and smiled at the two as they walked in. Hermione immediately ran over to the sink, washed her hands and got the frosting to decorate the small houses.

"Go on Harry, we made a house for you to decorate too" Harry was just as eager to get to the job.

In the living room

"Gram?"

"What Tom?"

Tim sighed; *she'll never get my name right.* "Why are you being so nice to Harry and not me? I really don't like when you do that"

A look flashed across her face. A look that Tim had never seen directed his way. It was almost empathy, but it was gone before he can catch the expression and lock it in memory "Tim,"

Oh my goodness! What did she call me!?

“I have been waiting sixteen years for you to even get remotely close to asking me a question like that. You have gotten married, had a child, who got a boyfriend, and even her boyfriend understood before you...”

“Understood what?”

“To talk to me. Ask why I treat you that way. Stand up for yourself. Prove to me that you deserve my daughter”

“Didn’t I prove that over the 16 years of strong relationship?” Tim was sure he had her there. It had, after all, been a long time. How could she go on with her charade that long?

“Oh that’s simple. It took you so long that I grew to not like you very much.”

Oh that explains it all. I was so slow she hated me.

“However, I did give up on you never standing up to me after about 14 years”

“Oh. So that means you’ll keep calling me Tim and treat me better?”

“No. This is my relationship with you now. I enjoy our little squalls.”

Tim smiled. *I never knew she was nice deep down within the burrows of all her fur.*

“Yeah I guess they are fun, but one little thing then?”

“What is it?”

“Can you call off your dog? He took the remote and I’ve been watching the dog show for the past 2 hours” Then he put on his best sad puppy face.

She laughed at Tim, “No, but you can call me Debbie if you really want. I figured if anything will change it would be that. I feel old when you call me Gram”

Tim scrunched his face and turned back to the dog show until the kids were through with their fun in the kitchen.

Um...Later

Tim, Hermione, and Harry had the best time decorating the tree. After having a difference of opinion on the color of tinsel to use, they had a tinsel fight that ended in Harry and Hermione being covered in the gold tinsel that Tim wanted to use.

At around midnight they all settled into bed in anticipation to Christmas day.

December 25th

Harry didn't get a wink of sleep last night. What person his age would get sleep? It was Christmas morning! It was nearing 6:00am and he was about ready to wake everyone up to open presents.

I wonder how early is too early. If it were up to me we would have opened them two hours ago. But I guess I'll let them sleep. Oh bugger it all!

Harry got out of bed and strolled over to Hermione's bed. As he was about to touch her shoulder to wake her up, he stopped; he remembered that horrible day, and what happened the last time he tapped her shoulder to wake her up.

Hermione turned over and smiled at him. "I was waiting for you to wake up. I didn't sleep at all last night."

Harry laughed, "I didn't sleep either. I was just trying to be courteous."

Hermione sat up and got out of bed. She stood in front of Harry and gave him a kiss on the lips. "Happy Christmas Harry! Now let's go awake everyone"

"No need for that" The two teens jumped apart and looked over towards the doorway. Alex was standing there with a smirk on her face. "You two are adorable, so young yet so in love. Reminds me of my first boyfriend. I really miss....what's his name" Alex frowned while

trying to remember the boy's name. "Anyway, we're all awake. Tim came in and woke us all up. He was heading for your rooms but Rach thought you could use the sleep. Now come on lets get to it"

They walked downstairs to find the adults already sitting around the tree.

It took the family a full hour to open the gifts and Harry couldn't be happier. This was the first time he even received a present on Christmas that wasn't a hand knitted sweater, something odd from Hagrid, or something from Dumbledore. This was different, because he got these gifts as a member of their family, not as only a friend.

Harry loved the watch Hermione got him. It was a wizarding watch. It would tell time and look like a normal muggle watch, but when you hit the button on the side it shows you where your friends are; it allowed five people to be set into it.

Hermione loved the present Harry got her. It was a simple heart shaped locket with her initials engraved on it, and he wanted to let Hermione pick what picture to put in there.

Harry was currently outside frowning at Tim. He had gotten a RC airplane and wanted to try it out outside. Tim ensured him that he couldn't use it without adult supervision. That meant Tim played with the plane while Harry stood to the side with a pout. He got tired of watching Mr. Granger play with HIS plane so he went inside. Hermione immediately noticed his face.

"What happened, Harry?"

"Your dad won't let me play with MY toy. He took over"

Rachael laughed. "I knew he was far too eager to buy you that Harry."

Hermione put on her coat and pulled Harry along outside with her. They stood on the deck for a while with laced hands, and watched her father act like an amazed toddler.

Hermione bent down and picked up a ball of snow and launched it at her father. Her aim was perfect because she hit him right in the back.

He turned around, and it was now officially war. He landed the plane and tackled his daughter in the snow and throwing snowball after snowball at her in her futile attempt to run.

Harry saw Hermione getting cornered again and started launching snowballs at Tim.

“What!? This is no fair. Your *boyfriend* can’t help you!” Harry wondered how much longer it would be until Tim was able to say boyfriend without it sounding like a forbidden word.

After they piled her father in snow, Harry hesitantly asked if they could make a snowman...he'd never made one before.

Tim was worn and out of breath and decided to leave them to it. “Hermione knows what she’s doing in the snowman department. I’m gonna go inside and see if there is something to drink...or an oxygen tank” he mumbled the last part, making them laugh.

It took them a while but they had finally built the perfect snowman, and they both were exhausted. It had been a long day of family fun for them and Harry was sure that they could tell he was greatly enjoying the trip and family time.

Harry and Hermione were in their room talking about everything that happened and how much fun they were having, but eventually an inevitable topic was brought up.

“I loved this winter break, but in another week we’ll have to go back to everything in school and we ran into problems last time. We know Draco isn’t the heir. Now we have to try harder to figure out who this Tom person is”

Hermione nodded “Yes, that’s true. I know it will be difficult Harry, but for now lets just focus on the time we have outside of the wizarding world.” And they fell asleep with foreboding thoughts in their minds.

At Hogwarts

Looking for him is the hard part. I must get rid of a muggle to pleassssse my massssster. I've come close but never ssssucceeded in killing a ssstudent, this time around.

The snake slithered around the halls late at night and searched for the boy.

Richard Polk was up late waiting for a letter from his mum. He was a 7th year prefect. He had to cancel his vacation early and get back to school, because his baby sister was sick with the chicken pox. He never had them so he thought it'd be best if he stayed away from her. After all, he liked Hogwarts, his girlfriend was still here and it was the safest place to be. He was in the Gryffindor common room when he heard a faint tap on the portrait door. He was sure it was his girlfriend from Hufflepuff so he went over to open it. He opened the door, looked up into its eyes, and never had another thought again.

The basilisk slithered away and back to its hide out. It finally succeeded in killing another mudblood; the first in fifty years. His master would be please indeed.

Chapter 18: OMG it's !

Neville Longbottom was bored, tired, and worn out at Hogwarts. It had been months since Christmas break, and he still couldn't get over it. One of the healers thought his mother, Alice, had made a few movements. This shocked him and his gram, because his parents had been unconscious and in a magical coma for almost 11 years. They were held under the Cruciatus Curse for too long; the healers believed they were lost in their own minds and there was no way they could help them.

He and his gram rushed over to the hospital to find that she was still gone, alive, but nothing there; the exact same way as his father.

They were crushed. In those few minutes, they had high expectations of a Christmas with ALL of the people they loved, but Alice and Frank were not coming back anytime soon. He kept having the chilling feeling that he'd never see his parents awake and well; not at all in his life time.

His grand mum had gotten emotional about his parents and sent him home early during the break. So Neville was forced to spend Christmas alone in the Gryffindore tower. There were a few people left, Richard Polk, Anna Davis, and Meg Wright, but no one his age, no one he knew.

Since he spent all his time in his dorm room alone, Neville decided to indulge in the book he found in the girls restroom. There was a boy found petrified in the halls and everyone believed Harry had done it. Neville didn't know what to believe. On one hand Harry was a nice guy, very brave, and an average student. But as of late, Harry has been withdrawn to only Ron and Hermione, he speaks parslemouth like last Slytherin heir, and he's always seen with a frown.

Neville was at a lost of what to think anymore. He knew he's been through some changes too. He wanted nothing more but to hurt the people who put the Cruciatus on his parents, but he was a week little boy, a nobody. Was is definitely the key word. Everyone noticed the change in Neville. He held himself with more pride and power. He was still quite and a klutz, but no one teased him about it anymore...not even the Slytherins.

Flashback

Neville arrived in Hogwarts via floo. He was greeted by professor McGonagall and led to the tower...again. He ignored her comments of 'my greatest condolences'. His parents weren't dead it bothered him to hear people give him pity when nothing was wrong.

He rushed up to his dorm and slammed his trunk on the floor.

I hate this! Not only do I get my greatest hope crushed but I'm forced to spend the remainder of the holiday IN HERE ALONE!

He threw his photo of his parents against a wall and his heart tore as it shattered. He immediately regretted what he had done. He carefully picked up the pieces, hoping that he wouldn't cut or damage the picture.

His parents waved at the camera, smiling, happy, and aware of everything. He tried to calm himself. He couldn't blame anyone but the death eaters and Voldemort.

He decided to read the book he found. He opened it to find it was blank. "Why would someone have a blank book?... Maybe it's a journal. I could sure use one right now."

(A/N: I hope this isn't too confusing but Neville will write like this 'blah'. The response will be 'blah')

Neville began to write,

'Today was a bad day'

'Why?'

Neville was startled, and shut the book. After a while of thinking about it and his boredom settling in, he reopened the book.

'I'm glad you came back'

'Who are you?'

'I'm Tom, Tom Riddle. What's your name?"

'Neville Longbottom'

'So Neville, why was today a bad day?'

'My parents are in a magical coma and I thought they were well, but I was let down again. I'm stuck here in Hogwarts during Christmas break.'

'What do you mean let down again?'

'I guess others see me as the class klutz or nerd'

'Have you ever wanted revenge? Or more power and respect?'

'Ha! Of course I want more respect. I've only ever wanted revenge on You-Know-Who and his followers.'

'Hello?' The long pause continued.

'What if I told you I can help you?'

Neville thought long and hard about this anonymous source offering him help.

'Would there be any broken rules?'

'No. None at all'

'How can I trust you?'

'There is one way. You are writing to me in my journal. I can show you memories of my past and you decide whether or not to trust me"

Before Neville could write out his answer, he was sucked into another time. Tom showed Neville just enough to make him believe he was a nice guy. He showed him everything about the Chamber of secrets that led to Hagrid being expelled from school. After the memories were viewed, Neville was shot back into his seat.

He wrote three words that led to a series of bad events and mishaps.

'I trust you'

December 26 Headmaster's Office

Minerva was pacing in front of the Headmaster's desk. A student was found dead in the Gryffindore common room last night. It was all too familiar.

"Albus! We must close the school at once! I can't believe you're considering letting it remain open! The students are in grave danger!"

Dumbledore simply raised his hand to get her attention, "Minerva, we must remain calm and think about this. This only happened because the school is too empty."

She let out a gasp and her eyes widened, "How can you say that!? You know! You know this is what happened last time the chamber was opened! With the chamber opened NO ONE is safe! We must evacuate the building and get the aurors on the job!"

The old man was beginning to get frustrated. This was the last thing he needed. "MINERVA, ENOUGH!"

She stood there, mouth agape. He never yelled at her before.

"I know it is not safe! But whoever this is, is not in the staff!" he gave her a meaningful look "and I know for certain it's not Hagrid".

He stood up and walked over to the window and held his gaze on the few students outside enjoying the day. "Whoever the heir is, it's a student. There are still about 100 students in the school, scattered all over the castle. If we close Hogwarts now, we'll never catch the person." He took his seat again while giving her distressing look. "We will have the school on high guard until school starts. After that we will lower the amount of guards but keep some here patrolling at night. No prefect will be allowed to patrol anymore...Do you understand why I can't let this school close Minerva?" His eyes were almost pleading for her to understand.

She wanted to debate, but with guards around the school it wasn't like he was endangering them more. "I understand Albus"

End Flashback

Harry, Ron, and Hermione were sitting at their table trying to figure this mystery out, but they were getting nowhere.

"Look, whoever did this was here during the break and had access to Gryffindor common room. We can narrow it down from there."

Hermione gave and exasperated sigh, "No Harry, just because they knew the password doesn't mean it was a Gryffindor. You heard McGonagall, the rules are too strict but people still found a way to give out the passwords to people in other houses...We have to keep going along with this but it will be harder. It's been three and a half months and the aurors have been on your trail more and more. We can't even walk the hallways in peace, yet alone get information"

Ron mumbled something that sounded like the twins.

Harry quirked an eyebrow, "What did you say Ron?"

Ron squirmed uncomfortably and braced himself for attack, "I said the twins had the aurors break schedule for about a month now. They let me see it a few times"

Harry stared at Ron with and unreadable expression. Hermione on the other hand let you a furious growl, "ARE YOU BLOODY SERIOUS!?"

The boys gasped and cowered in fear of the petite girl. They were more afraid then if she said a swear word. "YOU MEAN TO TELL ME YOU SEEN THE...ARRGH!" She was so angry she couldn't even finish her thought.

"I'm sorry okay? I wasn't thinking of using it for that. Fred and George use it for times to sneak out and times to return. It just never crossed my mind"

Hermione's eye still had a slight twitch while Ron and Harry still had a slight shake. "Okay I'm going to try to stay calm" She forced a smile on her face, which was kind of scary, because the rest of her face said something entirely different. "Just do one little thing Ron- get the

schedule from your brothers. I don't even want to know how you will do it, just be sure that you do." When they both nodded their heads Hermione asked, "What are you doing Harry? I was talking to Ron"

Harry sat up straighter in his seat, which shocked him because he never realized he was leaning away from Hermione. "Oh um...I was just agreeing with you. Wasn't I Ron?" He looked hopefully at him.

Ron scrunched up his face and gave a grunt, "It looked like you were scared to me".

Harry sent a glare at his friend. ***I wish he knew how to read facial expressions better.***

"Well I'm going to head up to the dorm for the night, see you later Harry and... Hermione" Ron let down the silencing charm and paused when he noticed the other students were staring at the three. "Enjoy the show then!?" They all burst out in laughter at the boys.

Ron stomped up the stairs and Harry blushed. "What's so funny?" asked Hermione.

"Well Hermione you must admit it had to look odd. You down right scared us with that outburst and it wasn't even aimed towards me. Now imagine how that looked to them with no sound" Harry was laughing with them by the time he finished.

Hermione gave a small smile, "I guess it was kinda funny"

QUIDDITCH!!

It had been a few weeks since their last meeting and Ron had come through from them. He got a copy of the schedule from his brothers, and an apology from Hermione.

It had been a hard couple of months but Harry was excited today. He had another game and this one was against Slytherin. Every since he found out Draco was the new seeker, he's been waiting to have ago at him. And today was the day. He was dressed in his uniform and waiting to start the game.

The crowd was roaring! It seemed like all the houses showed for this game. Slytherin vs. Gryffindor, it was always the game of the year. Since Draco had enough training to start the game it was going to be even better.

“WELCOME ALL; WELCOME ALL! IT'S THE MOST ANTICIPATED GAME OF THE YEAR! SLYTHERIN VS GRYFFINDOR!”

The crowd went wild at the mention of Gryffindor. There was no doubt the Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws wanted Slytherin to lose, but the silver and green still had their fair share of applause.

“I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY WE ARE HAVING THIS GAME. WE ALL KNOW SLYTHERIN PLAYERS ARE ...”

“Mister Jordan! Keep with the game”

“Okay, okay AND NOW HOOCH IS OUT ON THE FIELD IN THE CENTER OF THE PLAYERS! GEEEEEEET READY THE GAME IS ABOUT TO START!”

Madam hooch released the bludgers and quaffle, blew her whistle. “AND THEY'RE OFF!”

Both teams took flight as the game began. Harry and Draco soared above the rest and glared each other down before starting their hunt for the snitch.

Meanwhile in the stands Ronald Weasley was going wild. “COME ON GO GRYFFINDOR” He was trying to start a wave.

Fred clunked him in the back of the head. “Ow! What you do that for?”

George spoke up “You're embarrassing us! Look at poor Ginny. She's trying to pretend she doesn't know us.” Ginny was hiding behind Hermione, staring daggers at Ron.

Fred continued, “Now put your shirt on! I can't believe you painted yourself!”

"I never thought we'd be the voice of reason" George mumbled.

Hermione was a nervous wreck. She hated all the games he played, but Slytherin was known for playing dirty. With the determined look on Harry's face, she knew she may have a heart attack before she reached thirteen.

Deeper within the stands stood a three foot tall, big eyed, pointy eared house elf. This elf wasn't exactly the same as the others. He adored Harry Potter enough to bend the rules to warn him again.

"GRYFFINDOR SCORES! KATIE BELL IS ONE HOT-"

"LEE" McGonagall yelled again

"What? I was only gonna say she's a hot player of the game... THAT CAN ASK ME OUT ANYDAY"

She rolled her eyes and gave up trying to obtain the energetic boy.

Harry was trying to find it, but the little bugger was nowhere in site! ***Where could it be? I can't lose to Draco. Anyone but him. OH I see it! Now if I can only inch my way towards it without being caught.***

"IT LOOKS LIKE POTTER HAS CAUGHT SITE OF THE SNITCH"

Harry rolled his eyes; ***I really hate it when he does that! Now Malfoy sees it too!***

Harry took off in the direction of the small golden ball that whipped around the crowd. The crowd went crazy as the two seekers went full speed heading towards them. That excitement turned into fear when they realized that the two seekers were going full speed heading towards them! The snitch zipped higher and the seekers made a mad dash straight up just inches away from the crowd, leaving the students wondering if they had any extra pair of pants nearby.

Harry rush ahead of Draco, reached his hand out and felt the wind from the snitch's wings. His finger brushed against the ball, and he was thrown backwards. His reflexes were quick and hand grabbed

the broom before he could fall. He was on an adrenaline high and pulled himself over his broom.

He glanced up and Draco was clutching his hand. ***OH NO! He didn't get the snitch did he?***

Malfoy shook his hand and looked like he wanted to cry. ***Oh okay, but what's wrong with the snitch?***

Hermione was looking through her binoculars and noticed the force both boys had when they came in contact with the ball. "Ron!" she looked at her red head friend bouncing up and down waving his hands with his face painted red and gold, and she rolled her eyes, "Will you stop it! Harry may be in trouble. The snitch just did something to him and Malfoy"

"Why would I care about Malfoy!?"

"...That wasn't the point Ron. The point was the snitch is cursed!"

"Oooh because with the snitch cursed this game will never end!"

She stared at him blankly. "Are you serious? Never mind Ron, let's just try to break the curse so we can...end the game. Now I read that the person needs to have constant eye contact. Do you see any of that from anyone?"

Ron looked around at the crowd and frowned at Hermione. "Are YOU serious? Everyone is watching the game! And you call me simple."

She rolled her eyes. "This may be harder than I thought."

Harry was frustrated. The snitch was zooming around right in front of him and he couldn't touch it. He made up his mind he knew what he had to do. He started for the snitch again but it wanted a chase. But Malfoy wasn't giving up; not with his father watching the game. He gave a signal and one of his horrendously bucked tooth slick haired cronies and he smacked a bludgers a Harry.

Hermione saw the entire thing and tried to warn him but, let's face it, she was drawn out by the crowd.

The bludgers hit Harry hard in the shoulder and sent him spiraling.

"POTTER IS HIT. THAT WAS A CHEAP SHOT FROM THAT BUCKED TOOTH."

"A detention will be given!"

"ERRM I'M SURE THAT WILL GO ON HIS STATS!"

Harry was in pain. He but he was still on the trail. He made eye contact with Hermione in the crowd. She shook her head, no, furiously, but he gave her a final nod yes. He gripped the broom with his legs and reached with his free hand, as the other was searing pain.

Hermione saw his movements and pushed some students out of the way and aimed her wand. '*He's being stupid for a simple game, but I'm ready*'

This is seriously gonna hurt

He reached out and clasped the snitch and immediately passed out when he felt himself being blown away from his broom. He was falling, the crowd in shock from the waves of energy and the sound resounded throughout the stadium.

"Carpo bardus!" Hermione yelled. And Harry slowed down and hit the ground with a soft thud. She and Ron made their way through the crowd to get to the grounds.

The crowd was silent; "GRYFFINDOR WINS WITH AN AMAZING CATCH FROM POTTER! 320 TO 170."

Cheers and applause erupted in the field, with shouts of 'Gryffindor' and 'Potter'.

Hospital wing

"Is Harry going to be okay? Is he hurt? Will he wake up? When will he get up? Why isn't he awake yet? Are you ignoring me?"

"Miss Granger! I need peace. He was just brought in here 1 minute ago! I will dismiss you if you don't quiet down."

Ron snickered at Hermione's slack jaw. "You gonna pick that up Hermione?"

She looked down and said "Pick what up?"

"Your bottom jaw" She turned and ignored him and waited for madam Pomfrey to finish with Harry.

Ugh my eyes. Oh my arm. Come to think of it, my whole body hurts.

"Harry! Oh Harry you're awake!"

"Hermione?" He opened his eyes. "We won right? Did the snitch stay in my hands?"

"YEAH MATE IT WAS WICKED!"

"I seriously think you two need to get your priorities in order. Madam Pomfrey said you broke your arm during the fall. It was so horrible! We could see your arm bent out of shape, so Lockhart tried to repair it but he took all the bones away."

"What! Who let him get near my arm!?"

"We weren't there in time. We had to get through crowds of people and when we got there he already had the want aimed and the incantation flowing out his mouth."

"What about my arm?"

"She gave you skelegrow. It smelled so foul mate! You nearly choked in your sleep!"

"She said you will have a painful night Harry. Growing bones will be a painful thing"

Harry was asleep later that night and got a sharp pain in his arm. It was the seventh time he woke up from it. This time was different

though. He opened his eyes and was greeted with even larger eyes two inches from his face.

"AAAHH! Jeez Dobby don't scare me like that. What are you doing here?"

"Dobby wants to apologize to Harry Potter sir. Dobby made Harry Potter fly off his broom!"

"It was you! Why would you do that Dobby!"

"Dobby is sorry sir. But Dobby heard his master say your time is closer to and end. So dobby took action sir."

"If somebody else was going to kill me, I'd think you were trying to help them"

"OH NO SIR! Dobby would never hurt Harry Potter...on purpose. Dobby thought Harry Potter would stop after he got the shock. The big boom was supposed to be for mister Malfoy when he caught the snitch. Because Mr. Malfoy is stupid enough to still go after it!"

Harry looked a bit affronted that he was stupid enough to go after it, "Apology accepted Dobby, but PLEASE stop helping me! I appreciate it but you are doing too much. You could have simply snuck in and told me this like you're doing now... But I think you better go. And thanks Dobby."

The little elf's eyes shone with ...***love? He's great but he still scares me.***

Umm a few days later

It had been a few days since the match and the trio was nowhere close to figuring out who the heir was. Harry and Ron were walking back to the common room when they ran into Neville, literally.

"Oi, Nev you should walk with us. You know we aren't allowed to walk the halls alone"

"I don't need your advice Ron" Neville snarled.

"What has your knickers in a twist? I was just trying to help you!"

"I don't need anyone's help" and he stalked down the hallway.

Harry and Ron looked at one another and shrugged. When they reached the common room they sat next to Hermione; she read a book and Ron ate an apple.

"Harry what are you thinking about?"

"Neville"

Ron stopped and looked at Harry while he was still in mid-chew.
"Umm you're thinking about Neville?"

"Not in that way Ron! Just he's been acting weird lately. He comes back just before curfew, and he's the first one out in they day. Then his attitude has changed. He's...well he's acting almost Slytherin."

Ron continued to chew, "Yeah he reminds me of Ginny a few months ago...almost like her: mean, stupid, her odd streak wore off on him." Ron laughed.

...

.....

.....

"Oh my!" Hermione sure had another bright idea. "Whatever it was that was controlling Ginny has Neville now!"

Harry looked apprehensive, "That's a pretty broad thing to say. I mean, it could be just a mood change"

"Not like this Harry. Think about it. It was less than a month later and Neville started acting the same way. I'm going to talk to Myrtle, maybe she can help"

"Wait Hermione I know I may not be that smart but Harry isn't even following"

"We know the Basilisk is petrifying people and killed one student already. We don't know where the chamber is or even if it is on the grounds. Whoever the heir is may be using them to let the snake out! Think about it. Ginny was nowhere to be found when the snake was set free, and Neville you said it yourself. He's out late and up early. Maybe he's letting it out and putting it away! If we can find out who the heir is we can stop this person and save Neville."

Harry was in deep thought, taking in everything Hermione said. "Who said it's a person?"

"What? Harry what else is there? It has to be a person"

"No Hermione. We have talking pictures for crying out loud! Ginny! You remember? She said she got rid of IT. Maybe it's a ghost, maybe it's a painting, and maybe it's an object. But whatever it was Neville found it."

"I can't believe I didn't think of that before! We have an hour before curfew, let's go see Myrtle"

The trio made their way to the girls' restroom and found Myrtle singing in her stall. "Oh Harry I've missed you!"

Hermione stood in front of him, "Not now Myrtle, we need answers. We know the basilisk—"

"Don't say that! I don't like to remember it!"

"But it's been around again and it's hurting others. We need to know everything you know. Was there anybody suspicious around here? They say the boy that was petrified was found right outside this corridor. Surely you've seen something."

Myrtle hummed and after a few minutes, she finally decided to speak to them, "I saw the red head girl crying with her book. She was upset and must not have liked the book anymore because she flushed it. It was stupid move on her part because it stopped up the toilet...My favorite toilet"

Ron rolled his eyes, "Myrtle FOCUS!"

She giggled, "A little later a brown haired boy about your age came and got it out. He said that it was what had the toilet stopped up. He said something about water in the halls. I see that boy a lot now. He's cute."

"He's in here all the time?"

"Yes he just left." She whirled around the restroom and stopped behind Harry. "He's not as cute as you Harry"

"Oh erm...okay. But what is it that he does while in here?"

"I don't know. He always kicks me out when he's doing something. Just like Tommy and the red head."

All three pair of eyes scrambled and checked around the room. They saw no snake but they were ready to leave. They knew the chamber had to be connected to this room somehow.

"We have to go now!" Harry yelled. They ran until they stopped in front of the headmaster's office.

"How do we get in?" Ron was panicking.

They banged on the bricks that took shape of the door and they were not successful in getting in.

"What could be so important?" a cheery voice said from behind them.

"Professor Dumbledore! We know! We know where the chamber is!"

The old man's eyes widened and he ushered them into his office. They told the story of the chamber and about Ginny throwing away a book, Neville finding it, and all of their theories.

"You seem to be on the right track and I appreciate you trying to help the staff figure this out, but that restroom was the first place we checked. There is no chamber there. And maybe Miss Weasley and Mister Longbottom are just going through stages. You all are growing up after all."

Harry was furious, “How can you say that! We have spent all this time trying to figure it out and we got it!”

“Mister Potter you are mistaken. You don’t know all that you think you do. Hagrid was taken away today. He was believed to be the last to open the chamber and since he is here they took him today. We know the animal is a Basilisk, like you said, but this chamber is far too hidden. We plan on getting it with our Aurors and professor Lockhart, when it is loose. We searched up and down that restroom it is not their.”

Harry stood up angrily and left the room followed by Hermione and Ron.

Gryffindor Common Room

“If he believes we are imagining it all, we’ll go there tonight.”

Hermione jumped up and put a silencing charm around them, “Harry let’s think this through” she pleaded.

“NO. Hermione we have no help. He won’t help us. He thinks we’re dumb kids!”

“They checked the restroom already Harry! What do you expect! We name the one place they first suspected!”

“WELL THEY DIDN’T LOOK GOOD ENOUGH!” Hermione flinched at how close he was. She hated debating with Harry.

“Hey mate, take it easy. I think she has a point, but I agree with you. If there is really nothing there we should check ourselves and have no problems then.”

Harry looked over to Hermione and she nodded her head. She was in. “But Harry we can’t do it today. The Aurors are doing their inspection tonight”

“It’s settled then. Tomorrow night we will check the restroom ourselves”

Josh: OH MY GOD! Where the hell have you been?

Meghan: Yeah! I thought you forgot the story!

Jay: Look I'm tired of waiting. Did you forget about this story or something?

Me: Um well...you see.....what had happened was...um...NO of course I didn't forget. I still got reviews in my email that reminded me from time to time.

Josh and Meg pull out bats and chains, while Jay sets a fire and load up the C4

Meghan: Wait a minute... I'm the one with training on an assault rifle! I get a gun! pulls out a C7 that's better... hehe

Me: Look I talked to most of you everyday and you never tried to get me to write!

Jay: Oh...um... but I knew everything that was going on and decided to let you rest.

Meghan: Hey I was away for the summer and had no net access, so I would have if I had the chance! ... Plus you of all people should know... the only time I had internet was with a certain person and I wasn't passing up that opportunity just so u can write. (That was FUN!)

Josh: eats an apple Eh, I just forgot.

Me: gives best sad face to the readers I'm sorry for the long wait but ... if I wasn't dealing with some illness, or random family or friend situation; I was just too lazy to write. Now excuse me while I run from all of the readers who still want to throw dangerous objects at me. runs like hell is trying to draft for the army

Josh: Trips Monisa and takes a bite of his apple REAL MEN DON'T RUN FROM THERE TROUBLES!

Me: I AM NOT A MAN YOU JACK ASS!

Josh: Could have fooled me.

Jay: Oh dear god... she's going to kill him

Meghan: Shakes head this should be fun to watch. I've been waiting to see this for months!

Sorry readers but this fight will only be available on Pay Per View, order today and see for only \$8.99.

RECAP:

Harry looked over to Hermione and she nodded her head. She was in. “But Harry we can’t do it today. The Aurors are doing their inspection tonight”

“It’s settled then. Tomorrow night we will check the restroom ourselves”

Chapter 19: The Chamber of Secrets

Harry, Ron, and Hermione were standing under the invisibility cloak.

“Ron! I thought the guards were supposed to be going on break now!”
Hermione whispered furiously.

“Hold your trolley fiddles Hermione it’s not even 11:00 yet!”

Harry scrunched up his face in confusion, “What’s a trolley fiddle?”

Ron gave an exasperated sigh, “It’s a -”

“Hush! They’re leaving”

The two guards watching the hall, leading to the restrooms, took off towards the exit while the three preteens ran to the girls’ restroom. They made a sudden stop while trying to keep quiet. All of the professors were in there and they seemed to be having a meeting in hushed tones, and they almost gave themselves away.

"Mister Potter may have been on to something. All clues point to this restroom. Years of checking and searching and we've yet to find anything" Dumbledore said to his staff.

"I don't see why we are here again; just because that brat says so, you bring us all here AGAIN...I have better things to do with my time"

"Severus! How dare you talk to the headmaster this way. And what better could you do? What's more important than trying to save your students' lives?" McGonagall was appalled.

"Don't speak to me that way *Minerva*. I'd rather get the potions set up for the tests that are coming up." Snape sneered at the Gryffindor head of house, "We've searched this place a million times. There is no Chamber. Just a cover up for what really happened. A student went on a killing spree and was never caught!"

"Enough!" Albus yelled, "We will retire for the night and continue this journey tomorrow. All except you" he pointed to an empty corner and it left the trio confused. "You will continue to search. The students seem to think you're here for nothing...prove them wrong." There was no reply.

They moved to the side trying not to make a sound as all of their professors took lead out of the restroom. As soon as the coast was clear, Ron snatched the cloak off of them.

"That bloody old man has gone bonkers! You saw him!? Pointing to the corner and talking to himself... IN FRONT OF THE OTHER PROFESSORS!!" Ron was having *another* one of his random rants.

Harry and Hermione folded the cloak, sat it on the floor and started their tasks as Ron continued his rant. "I mean talking to yourself isn't so bad. It makes for good conversation at times, but to do it in front of others, is just asking to be locked up with the crazy people in the mental ward!"

Harry had a feeling the 'it' they were looking for, would have to do with a snake. He searched the bricks on the wall hoping that maybe it was like the passage to the wizarding world from muggle London.

"I sometimes talk to myself. It helps me get me focus you know? But for that old bat to do it in front of his staff is just mad"

"Ronald! No one is listening to you!" Hermione was obviously annoyed.

Ron grumbled, "Must be that time of the mo- OOOF!" He slipped over the thin sheer cloak laid on the floor and scraped his knuckles. "Bloody cloak!"

"Karma usually happens immediately with you. I heard what you were going to say Ronald"

He went over to the sink to rinse his hand and noticed the snake on the faucet. "This must have been a Slytherin's restroom before" he mumbled.

Harry was searching, but Hermione was wrong; he was very much aware of what Ron was saying. He just didn't show it, because obviously Ron needed some time to blow off steam and he did it by pondering out loud. ***Wait! What does he mean Slytherin restroom?*** "Why would you say that Ron?"

"Because there is a snake engraved on the faucet. It's very tacky too. I mean we don't have lions carved in the loo! That's just far too much pride. 'Oh I know let's give that Gryffindor bravery to the dangers in the loo!!'" Ron huffed, "Who would do that!?"

Harry walked over during Ron 'Hamlet moment' and took a look at the snake himself. "No one would do that Ron...no one. Slytherin's are cocky but they don't separate the restrooms. End even if they did, Slytherin would make at known. This snake would be huge. No one would put that there that small...unless they want to hide it!"

Harry grabbed Ron and pulled him a few steps back and said "open".

The huge contraption gave a giant shudder and after a few seconds, there stood the chamber of secrets' entrance, re-opened.

"Merlin's beard in a jar full of sugar puff ball fields!" Ron stared agape.

"Ron your sayings are really confusing! Will you please speak English! I don't understand you and I'm sure Hermione doesn't either...Hermione?"

Harry twirled around to see Hermione struggling to speak and move like something was holding her back. Her face was strained as her head gave small jerks. Her mouth was clasped shut, arms pinned to her sides, shoulders wiggled, knees buckled, and her feet were nearly off the ground. The very tips of her shoes were slightly scraping the floor as she began to move forward.

It was actually a mildly horrifying sight.

"What the bloody hell!?" Ron screeched. "Hermione is possessed!" Ron took a step backward, while Harry stood his ground trying to figure out what was happening to his girlfriend.

Just as he was about to tackle Hermione and give her a good shake to get her to snap out of it, a figure appeared. It was their DADA teacher Lockhart! He was holding Hermione's mouth shut while he practically lifted her in the air to get her to walk forward while she struggled in his grasp, with his wand aimed at her ready to attack.

"Well done Harry! Now I can take this and add it to my pages in my new book!"

"What!? We found the chamber not for you to steal and get more fame. We did it to prove to Dumbledore that I am not just a child and that I'm no liar!"

"Aww Mister Potter that was a lovely story. But unfortunately for you I am skilled at Obliviating people. You don't really think a handsome face like this could do so much, do you?"

It was then Harry and Ron noticed how horrid Lockhart looked. Ron scrunched his face in disgust, "What the fu-"

"What happened to your face?" Harry interrupted for his foul mouthed friend.

Lockhart had the nerve to look self-conscious. “I’m not beautiful and made up in the night! This is why Dumbledore allowed me to disillusion myself. I’d rather not be teased by other professors”

“You’re more of a woman than I thought u were!”

Lockhart scowled at Ron and pushed Hermione forward causing Harry to jump in attempt to catch Hermione in fear that she’d fall to the ground.

When Ron saw Lockhart shove Hermione, he took use of the distraction and gave him a shove while hitting his professor’s wand hand, effectively getting him to drop his only defense. Harry picked up the wand, as Ron was thrown to the side by Gilderoy.

He passed Lockhart’s wand to Hermione and stood with his own wand aimed at the horrible looking man. Ron got up and followed Harry’s lead, leaving the two young boys with fierce looks on their faces and holding their wands at a teacher while shielding an equally pissed Hermione behind them. Lockhart gave a gulp.

Harry looked around the room, grabbed his cloak, and then glanced down in the chamber entrance. “Someone has to go in there first”

Ron fearing for his life said, “AND IT WON’T BE ME!”

Harry hurriedly said “Neither will I”

Both boys glanced at Hermione with hope in their eyes. She frowned her face at them. “Ugh you boys can be so simple at times”. She took a step forward and roughly pushed Lockhart in the deep hole.

They heard a thump and he yelled “OUCH! OH NO, DON’T WORRY ABOUT ME! I’M PERFECTLY FINE! I ONLY NEED A NEW HIP! This will knock me out of the wizarding world’s most eligible bachelors.”

Ron leaned over the hole to look at the DADA professor, when he felt someone shoved him and he was freefalling. He landed on the ground, hitting the surface that didn’t hurt as much as he thought it would. He looked around to find the floor was covered with skulls and the dried

up remains of the monster of the chamber's lunch. It was then, Ron gave a girly scream.

Harry was in hysterics. "Hermione I can't believe you pushed them in! Did you see the look on Ron's face when he noticed the skulls!? It was classi-"

Hermione looked in the chamber with a smirk on her face. She leaned over and looked down at the three males and sweetly called, "Is it safe enough for the girl to jump in now?"

Ron mumbled something about "Muggles needing to be in Slytherin"

Hermione jumped down with Harry helping break her fall. Ron kept his wand focused on Lockhart as Harry led the way.

About halfway through, Hermione couldn't take it anymore. "Ronald you have to hold the wand right. He can easily take it from you that way. Look let me show you how." she reached to take the wand as Ron tried to snatch it back, emitting a spark that hit the ceiling. They looked up and there was a slight crumble but nothing looked too bad. Ron stepped over to Hermione and got in her face "LOOK WHAT YOU MADE ME DO"

CLUNK

A huge piece of rock fell and knocked Lockhart out cold.

Ron and Hermione stepped back toward Harry, when they noticed the walls began to crumble. The old walls gave a mighty shake and the wall before them completely collapsed, blocking their only known way out.

Ron turned and glared at Hermione, "If you'd only let me be, then we wouldn't be in this situation!"

Hermione took a deep breath to yell a reply and her features softened, "I'm sorry."

Harry and Ron stood mouths hanging open in pure shock. "What?"

"You're right I just blocked our only way out. I shouldn't have been such ..." she frowned her face as if she dreaded to say her next words. "Such a know it all"

Harry wanted to tell her she wasn't a know-it-all; that she wasn't completely to blame, but he'd have to save it for later. He placed his hand on her shoulder and gave her a reassuring nod. She knew he'd cheer her up later, but now it was time to finish this mystery.

They walked in silence down the, stuffy and foul smelling tunnels, never speaking a word to one another, but stayed as close as they possibly could. There was no telling if there would be traps or any other surprises. This was, after all, Slytherin's chamber.

They arrived to a large metal door, engraved with snakes surrounding a hooded figure. Harry said "open"....nothing happened. He frowned and glanced at Hermione, who was biting her lip, clearly thinking of a way to get inside.

"Um I don't think that worked. Try saying Salazar something. You know how pompous those Slytherins are."

Harry thought for a moment and began to guess. "*Salazar returns..... Salazar is here. Salazar the king. ...*" Harry gave a shrug "*Salazar hates Godric...Salazar and Founders...Salazar and Rowena? Salazar and Helga?*"

The door sprung to life, snakes moving away from the hooded figure. ***HELGA!?*** ***Slytherin and Hufflepuff?*** As the figure removed the hood, their anticipation grew. As well as the grip Hermione had on Harry's arm, which she was currently clasped onto.

"Welcome home" The voice said. The cloak figure within the metal was a woman. A beautiful woman, who's features glowed. She was smiling happily with her bulging belly.

"Who the bloody hell is that?"

Even Hermione was standing there astonished. "I..I don't know. I've never seen that person before. It seems familiar though."

"That's Helga Hufflepuff"

"Oh that's right Hogwarts A History chapter VII page-

"OKAY Hermione, we bloody get it. No need to shout it out and prove that you're a total nerd"

"HEY! Watch what you say Ron. She's not a nerd...Besides I knew who she was too because I read that book" Harry decided that he wouldn't tell Ron he found out who the cloaked figure was from the password; it helped his case with Ron about Hermione. "Now if you two are finished, be quiet and follow me inside."

They knew there was no time for arguing. The three walked into the large section of the dungeon. There was a giant stone snake head coming out the wall across from them. There were large puddles of water coming from the huge leaking pipes above them.

The place looked like if it were cleaned it could be a great place to keep to their privacy instead of charms around a table in the middle of the common room.

Harry surveyed the room and was shocked by what he saw; and from the gasp he heard from Hermione and shriek from Ron, he was sure they saw it too.

Neville.

He used to be known as chubby and shy Neville. Now he's almost seen as a bully. He's confident, bold, and at times a complete jerk. He was standing side by side with an older boy, both with similar smirks and Slytherin robes.

"WELCOME! It's about time you showed up." The older boy spoke with a strong voice.

"Neville" Ron yelled out. "Why are you here in Slytherin robes? Why are you helping him?"

Neville looked like he was waiting for one of them to ask him that question. He took a glance at the unknown boy, and waited for his

approval to speak. He gave a slight nod of his head and Neville stood up straighter with his pudgy yet intimidating form.

"WHY? I thought you all would understand why. I was a complete loser. I had no real friends. I only had peers, forced to cooperate with me because we're in the same house. I was picked on, made fun of, and mistreated by EVERYONE"

Harry felt Hermione jump at Neville's outburst. He had to admit, he was a bit scared too. He's seen Neville grow darker and darker over the year, and didn't know what he was capable of.

"You all ignored me. You have no idea what it feels like to be mistreated!"

Harry felt his temper flaring up. ***I have a pretty good idea and I'm not mental.***

"You don't know what it feels like to be just another face in the crowd! I'm SICK OF IT!"

The older boy smirked as young Neville stood in his rage. "Nice going Nev. But I think it's time I introduce myself. My name is Tom. Tom Riddle"

Hermione gasped, "You're the heir to Slytherin. Why are you doing this?"

"Watch your mouth mudblood! I don't need filth like you speaking to me! I don't have to have a reason! I am Lord Voldemort! Mudbloods like you disgrace our world. I plan to get rid of them!"

The room gave a small shake. Water dripped faster. Dust fell from the stone of the old ceilings. A wave of magical energy rushed throughout the room. Ron was about five seconds off running in a corner and cowering in fear. The power was so strong. He was sure it came from Neville or Tom until Hermione gave off a shriek.

Harry was holding her hand, but his grip seemed to be too tight for her to handle anymore. "Harry calm down. You could collapse this chamber. Please calm down".

Harry could hear the desperation in her voice and released her hand but his rage was still going strong. He took out his wand and threw a spell at Tom, only for it to go through him and vanish into the air.

"Wow Potter. You've gotten a bit of teen rage. Sadly I'm not fully here yet to teach you a lesson about throwing spells without calling for a proper duel. You see, I'm just a memory."

Neville pulled out a worn old black book.

"That book Neville is holding is all that is me. It is my journal; my diary; my soul. I've been speaking to Neville through this. He's given me permission to possess him to reopen the chamber. I had another worker before, but the little bitch decided to give up. She couldn't handle the power that comes with me." Tom gave a chuckle. "She even tried to get rid of me and flushed me in a toilet." He and Neville gave obnoxious laughs. "It turns out I need a body to transform into my own, so my soul can have a place to live. I guess you can call it a host of sorts. And since she couldn't handle my power...I'll let her soul be free and use her body."

Neville flicked his wand and a person began to float down from the dark corner of the ceiling and land with a small thud next to Tom. It was none other than the youngest Weasley red head.

"GINNY!!" Ron tried to run forward only to be held back by Harry and Hermione. "LET MY SISTER GO YOU BLOODY TRAITOR"

Neville turned to Tom and said, "I want to prove my loyalty to you. I'm young but you taught me a lot of things. I can defeat him. I can kill this Weasley."

Tom smirked and held his hand out toward the face protruding from the stone walls behind them.

"Very well. Take care of him, and my pet will handle Potter and the mudblood. I need to get let the spell take its course before I can take her body. You will NOT lose"

"Yes master" was Neville's short reply. With that said he drew out his wand and yelled, "Stupify" Sending Ron soaring backward hitting the

floor with a thud. He regained his balance and quickly withdrew his own wand.

Tom stood strong and with a final wave of his hand the monster of the chamber was released. 50 feet of venomous snake slithered its way from the wall with its eyes closed awaiting further command. *“Kill Potter, and don’t be afraid to have your dinner with the mudblood”*

Harry didn’t need to hear anymore. He grabbed Hermione’s hand and pulled her along full speed to the nearest tunnel. She asked no questions. It was pretty safe to assume the snake was waiting to catch its’ feast.

The couple ran as fast as they could but the snake was still on their heels. Hermione slipped, with her back hitting the wet floors and bringing Harry down with her. Harry knew the snake was too close for them to get back on their feet. So instead he rolled over on top of Hermione, making sure his shoulders covered her eyes, hoping that the snake would take him and maybe she can get the chance to run.

He heard Hermione yell, “Obex parietis”. The next sound he heard was a bang and the shrieking of a snake, followed by more bumps, bangs, and thuds. He pulled himself off Hermione to see her eyes clinched shut and her hand pointed in the direction of the snake.

He turned his head to see why the Basilisk hadn’t mauled them and Hermione yell, “No! Harry, don’t look at it.” He snapped his head back at her before his eyes could wander into the deadly eyes of the snake.

“Hermione what happened?”

He kept his back to the snake and pulled her into a standing position. She stood to his side, opened her eyes, and pointed to the shadow on the ground.

“The obex parietis spell. It’s a temporary barrier. I looked it up the other night after we decided to come here. I thought it’ll be useful in case we were caught by Aurors. It’ll give us a bit of lead way before they can come after us. It’s only temporary and unfortunately it’s see through. We can still see the basilisk and can still be killed”

A familiar song filled the air and deep down in the bowels of Hogwarts Fawks flew into the tunnel Harry and Hermione were in.

What the hell is Fawks doing here? How could the bird have known?

Before Harry could finish his thoughts Fawks dropped something in front of them.

“Harry it’s the sorting hat!”

He picked it up and reached inside. There was a beautiful sword inside with Gryffindor carved in the grip of the hilt. The basilisk gave a great scream and they turned their attention to the shadows on the ground. Fawks was clawing at the eyes of the great snake. Harry grabbed Hermione’s with one hand and clung to the sword and hat with the other hand. And they took off to the nearest exit leading them back to room it all started in. Ron was leaning over his sister weeping while Riddle and Neville seemed to be missing.

Harry dropped the sorting hat, ran over to Ron and asked “Ron where’s Neville? Where’s Tom?” Ron but he wouldn’t reply.

After a few minutes, Ron spoke in a whisper, “I can’t do this anymore Harry. Ginny is about to die. It’s all my fault. I’m supposed to be watching her while we’re here.”

“RON! Where are the other two-”

“Don’t worry about me mudblood I’m here”

Neville crept out from the shadows. His eyes were grey and lifeless. Ron stepped back from his sister and stood, a bit hesitant, with his friends.

Neville’s mouth moved but it wasn’t his voice coming out of his mouth. “Me and my buddy Neville here, decided to take care of things our own way.” Neville summoned the basilisk. “That bloody bird may have blinded my pet but they are marvelous creatures. You see, they don’t need their eyes to know where you are. He has enough venom

in him to take out all the students of Hogwarts. But I want him to handle you three first. *Attack!*"

The snake took action immediately. It first gave a snap towards Ron, who was barely able to dive out of the way. The basilisk curled up and was ready to attack again. Ron jumped to his feet and ran as fast as he could in the opposite direction.

He snake knew getting the red head boy would be no problem, but it was craving for a mudblood. Hermione was taken aback by the sudden attack on Ron, but when she saw the basilisk's attention drift to her she sprinted as fast as she could, feeling the wind from the strike the snake must have made behind her.

Ron tried to get back to help Hermione fight off the basilisk but he couldn't move. Someone hit him with a temporary full body bind. He saw the sorting hat float and disappear and realization dawned on him. He was out of harm's way and safe. Harry was protecting him. Ron hated that he felt helpless but he knew his best friend wouldn't do this without a plan. That's what he kept telling himself as he waited for the 5 minutes to wear off.

Hermione was getting on an adrenaline rush. The basilisk just missed biting her three times, and counting. She climbed the stone face with strength she never knew she had.

Even with her new found strength she found herself slipping. She gasped in shock when she felt a force push her up.

Temporarily forgetting the snake, she turned to see what gave her the life saving boost. She was puzzled when she realized no one was behind her.

Hermione was pulled out of her confusion when she felt warm sticky breath hit her neck. She slowly turned her head to come face to face with the monster of the chamber.

The snake knew the mudblood was its next meal. It was being so greedy that it ignored all of its other senses. The senses were telling him to focus on its surroundings; focus on the smell; focus on the

heat in the air. But all the snake wanted to notice was the trembling fear of the mudblood.

The giant basilisk gave a great hiss and moved back into striking position.

It all happened so fast that Hermione had no time to react. All she could do was close her eyes and anticipate the pain. The snake jerked forward and Hermione flinched, but never felt that pain she was anticipating.

She slowly opened her eyes and was astound by what she saw.

The basilisk was frozen in place with the tip of a sword sticking out the top of its head.

Its eyes, or the bloody holes where the eyes should be, were still focused on her. Blood dripping but still focused in her direction.

All the muscles in its body went limp and the monster let out a final weary hiss.

The sword seemed to pull back, withdrawing itself from the head of the reptile. Not even a full second later the great basilisk collapsed.

Hermione saw the fang hanging in the air next to her and tears filled her eyes. She knew what happened. She watched as the fang floated, clumsily, down the wall and she made her way down too.

Ron ran over from his position and rushed over to her side. She was sobbing.

Ron felt torn. He wanted to help Harry. But he couldn't ignore the fact that his sister was an inch from death a few feet away.

Hermione pulled the cloak off Harry and saw him hunched over the diary of Tom Riddle. He looked like he was struggling to remain conscious. She wanted to launch herself at him, and hug him, and kiss him, but he looked so hopeless. Her boyfriend was like Ron's sister Ginny.

Harry Potter, The-Boy-Who-Lived was dying and there was no potion strong enough to save him. He reached over with his left hand and pulled the fang out his arm. He motioned for Hermione to complete the task. She sunk to the floor and gripped the fang and plunged it into the center of the diary.

She was vaguely aware of a yell and a glow from the furthest corner of the room. She was vaguely aware of the blood dripping from the journal. She was vaguely aware of the song Fawks sang as he flew in circles above the four people remaining in the room. She was vaguely aware of Ginny Weasley taking a sharp intake of breath and opening her eyes, while Ron hugged his sister and cried tears of joy.

For that moment in time, Hermione was jealous of Ron. She envied the fact that he was celebrating because his sister was awake and alive, while she was crying tears of pure pain as Harry was dieing before her eyes.

Harry lay down roughly on his back with his arms spread out. His breathing was getting even shallower.

Hermione leaned over and delicately wrapped her arms around Harry in a desperate attempt to hug him one last time. With her head on his chest, she listened to his heart beat.

Ron and Ginny were standing behind Hermione, tears and jerks shaking their bodies.

Fawks landed next to Harry and leaned over his wound as Hermione held Harry as close as possible. The phoenix cried. 4 phoenix tears landed in Harry's wound, and it immediately began to seal up.

She could hear his heart beat speed up and took a glance at the bird leaning over Harry's arm. She sat up and looked to Harry's face to see him glancing down at her smiling. He looked perfectly fine.

"That was wicked!" Ron exclaimed.

Harry sat up nearly knocking Hermione off him, "I know! Did u see how it sealed up!? It felt a bit odd but it..." His voice drowned out

Hermione and Ginny rolled their eyes at the boy's stupidity.

Fawks flew in the center of the 4 and Hermione grabbed a hold to one of its legs and the rest followed her example. With a blink of an eye the 4 were in Dumbledore's office. There were four chairs behind them and they all took a seat.

BREAK

It took hours to relay their full story. It took longer for Dumbledore to teach them to put the selected memories into the pensieve. "Well it seems you all had a rough night. I will review your stories and have the memories checked. But I have one final question. What happened to Mr. Longbottom?"

Ron shifted in his seat and spoke up. "Neville got away. He ran out of another escape. Oh and Lockhart is knocked out somewhere in the tunnels before the chamber."

BREAK

The next two weeks of school were odd. Harry still wasn't exactly comfortable with Dumbledore. Things just didn't add up. It all seemed to be a part of a deliberate plan.

How did Dumbledore know that we were in the chamber? He had to know. Fawkes showed up and took us to his office where the chairs were waiting. It's not like we alerted the Aurors. I still can't trust him completely

The students in the school treated Harry differently. They all heard about the chamber. None knew the full story but the bottom line was that Harry Potter was innocent. There were awkward attempts to talk to him, but he didn't respond much; especially to Dean or Seamus.

Flashback

The news quickly spread that Harry Potter had been inside the Chamber of Secrets with his friends. Professor Lockhart had suddenly been rushed away to St. Mungos. The students were in an

uproar trying to figure out what happened. By the time dinner had arrived the students were getting demanding.

The Great Hall was full of noise and chatter. The Gryffindor students were the loudest by far. Dumbledore stood and silenced the students.

"It seems the paintings of Hogwarts can't keep quiet about private matters, so I feel it is time for me to correct the information you've heard through rumors. It isn't true that Mr. Potter is the new Dark Lord. It's not true that Mr. Potter beat up Professor Lockhart in the chamber. It is also not true that Mr. Potter and his friends were planning the destruction of the school in the chamber"

The students were relieved yet they feared the worst, because if none of that is true they wanted to know what really happened.

"What really happened in the chamber will remain a secret. However I will tell you that you all owe Mr. Potter, Ms. Granger, Mr. and Ms. Weasley your lives. Things could have gotten worse. Someone did re-open the chamber and Mister Potter and his friends exceeded any student standards and saved hundreds of lives. Another important thing I wanted to say is the importance of friendship." The students looked confused.

"None you seemed to notice the absence of Mister Longbottom. What he has done will remain unsaid, but sooner or later you all will see in the papers that Mister Longbottom is on the run from the Ministry. He's committed crimes far beyond any other 12 year old that has attended Hogwarts in over 20 years. This, perhaps, could have been prevented if he didn't receive constant mocking and emotional abuse from other houses as well as his own housemates. You all must learn to stick together in hard times. You've turned on Mister Potter countless times this year and he was still there to save you. You've made fun of Neville and he's gone astray. I'm not pointing the blame finger at you all, but I do want you to think things through before you act on them."

Later in common room

Harry, Ron, and Hermione sat in the fluffiest chairs in the common room. They were at peace until a large group of people in their year walked in. You could cut the tension in the room with a knife.

Seamus awkwardly walked over and stood in front of Harry. “Um Harry, I’m sorry again. I’ve been a complete jerk to you and I promise to never act that way again. But you were acting weird mate.”

There were mumbles of “me too” and “um yeah” from the rest of the students. Harry nodded his head and turned back to the fire. He’d accept the apology but it doesn’t mean he was exactly happy to hug them and sing a song of rejoice. He also couldn’t ignore the fact that he wanted the attention shifted to him...only AFTER they already turned against him. He had mixed feelings about the situation but for now he’d be happy he’s alive.

End Flashback

During the middle of the week Dumbledore explained the sword he pulled out of the hat was property of Godric Gryffindor. Harry wasn't too surprised since he was very much capable of reading the name engraved into the handle. He even ran into Mr. Malfoy and discovered Dobby was the Malfoy's house elf. Harry's quick thinking got the elf free that day and he walked off, leaving dobby to repay Malfoy for the years of abuse and Harry for the gratitude of saving him.

On the train ride home

Harry was left to his thoughts as Hermione slept, leaning her head on his shoulder, and Ron slept sprawled across the other seat.

Harry couldn't stop the smile from coming across his face as the train stopped at the King's Cross Station. After waking Ron and Hermione, they grabbed their things, left the train and went in search for their families.

Once again Harry and Hermione were pulled into the Weasley hugs. He had a feeling that Mrs. Weasley found out about the chamber but his face clearly said ‘I don’t want to talk about it’.

Ginny made her way over and Hugged Harry and Hermione. "I'm sorry for all I put you through this year, especially you Hermione."

"Why is it especially Hermione? I'm the one who saved your as-OOF" Ginny punched him the arm then winked at Hermione.

I'll never understand girls.

Hermione grabbed his hand and pulled him off in the direction of her parents. Before he could react he was nearly knocked over by Rachael's hug, then a man hug from Tim.

"We're so happy you're home" Rachael said as she let go of Hermione.

Tim added, "Yeah we are. I've been counting down for summer for months now. Oh and Harry I got that plane of yours to do some new tricks! You'll love it. I may have scraped some of the paint but...um... I'm sorry? Anyway I can't wait until we get back"

Hermione linked her fingers with his. "Come on Harry. Let's go home"

Home. I could get used to this.

THE END.....FOR NOW

A/N: Ok. I know I did a long A/N at the beginning but each of my betas added their own input in there. I actually grew close with them all and we did the A/N based on what they would do or say for real (and yes I do fight Josh often but we still friends). As for HP Rewritten, it is done and marked as complete. I may start on a rewrite of book three if enough people request it. And even then, it won't be up any time soon. I really want to thank my betas Meghan, Joshua and Justin. You guys helped a lot, even if I didn't agree with what you said all the time (killing Ron). To my reviewers, I LOVE YOU ALL! Thank you so much for reviewing and sticking with this story. If anyone wants to contact me...I'm addicted to MSN messenger lol. Now lets see if I can get everyone with alerts for this story to review haha. READ AND REVIEW PLEASE really big smile goes here.

